

<https://www.sogieducation.org/approach>

SOGI-inclusive education is as easy as 1-2-3.

**1: Policies & Procedures - Policies and procedures that explicitly reference SOGI have been proven to reduce discrimination, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts for all students.**

**2: Inclusive Environments - Inclusive learning environments—including SOGI-inclusive signage, word choices, and extra-curricular opportunities—create a positive and welcoming space for all students.**

**3: Teaching Resources - Lesson plans that teach diversity and respect and include examples of SOGI topics and 2SLGBTQ+ community members reflect the SOGI diversity in students' lives and society.**



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Policies and procedures that explicitly reference SOGI have been proven to reduce discrimination, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts for all students.



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Lesson plans that teach diversity and respect and include examples of SOGI topics and 2SLGBTQ+ community members reflect the SOGI diversity in students' lives and society.

**1: Policies & Procedures - Policies and procedures that explicitly reference SOGI have been proven to reduce discrimination, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts for all students.**

**EXAMPLE 1:**

ONTARIO

Reference document: policy001.pdf

"...gender-diverse students are not open about their identity at home for safety or other reasons. A school should never disclose a student's gender-diversity or transgender status to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) without the student's explicit prior consent. This is true regardless of the age of the student."

**Privacy**

All students have a right to privacy; unless specifically directed by the student, schools must keep a student's transgender/gender non-conforming status confidential. Transgender and gender-diverse students have the ability, as do all students, to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and decide when, with whom, and how much of their private information to share with others.

Some transgender and gender-diverse students are not open about their identity at home for safety or other reasons. **A school should never disclose a student's gender-diversity or transgender status to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) without the student's explicit prior consent. This is true regardless of the age of the student.**

**Pronouns 101**

Type	Name	Example
Feminine	She, her, her	She went to the store. I spoke to her. It was her apple.
Masculine	He, him, his	He went to the store. I spoke to him. It was his apple.
All-gender	They, them, their	They went to the store. I spoke to them. It was their apple.
All-gender	Ze, zir/zem, zirs/zers	Ze went to the store. I spoke to zir/zem. It was zirs/zers apple.
All-gender	Ze, hir, hirs	Ze went to the store. I spoke to hir. It was hirs apple.

Please note that these are not the only pronouns. There is an infinite number of pronouns as new ones emerge in our language. For a useful legally-oriented source on this, please see <http://www.editorscanberra.org/a-singular-use-of-they/>

## EXAMPLE 2:

SASKATCHEWAN

reference document: policy002.pdf

"Privacy/Confidentiality

All persons, including students, have a right to privacy, and this includes the right to keep one's transgender status private at school. Information about a student's transgender status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth also may constitute confidential medical information. Disclosing this information to other students, their parents, or other third parties may violate privacy laws. The Division shall ensure that all medical information relating to transgender and gender nonconforming students shall be kept confidential in accordance with local provincial privacy laws. School staff shall not disclose information that may reveal a student's transgender status to others, including parents and other school staff, unless legally required to do so or unless the student has authorized such disclosure"

## EXAMPLE 3:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

reference hyperlink page 82 to 95: <https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BoardPolicyHandbook.pdf>

reference document: policy002.pdf

"Schools must balance the parents' or guardians' need to be informed about their child's school experiences with individual's right to live freely in their self-identified gender and sexual-orientation."

"Situations arising at school may make it difficult or impossible for the school to keep an individual's status from parents or guardians. Schools can, in consultation with the individual, work with trained support providers to formally reveal the individual's gender identity to the parent or guardian in the relatively safe confines of the school."

"encouraging teachers to sponsor and support 2SLGBTQ+ positive initiatives such as GSA's or Diversity Clubs;"

Schools must balance the parents' or guardians' need to be informed about their child's school experiences with individual's right to live freely in their self-identified gender and sexual orientation. This can be complicated when there is a responsibility to communicate with the parent or guardian about any situation at school directly related to an individual's gender identity and sexual orientation. In general, the older the student, the more ownership they should have in this process. School personnel should err on the side of using the individual's preferred name and pronoun to protect the individual's privacy and human rights.

Situations arising at school may make it difficult or impossible for the school to keep an individual's status from parents or guardians. Schools can, in consultation with the individual, work with trained support providers to formally reveal the individual's gender identity to the parent or guardian in the relatively safe confines of the school. It is important to address all the potential consequences of this approach by consulting with and/or working with trained personnel familiar with such situations, while respecting that the process is owned by the

**EXAMPLE 4:**

BRITISH COLUMBIA

reference hyperlink page 9: <https://bccpac.bc.ca/images/Documents/Resources/QA-Health-Canada-SOGI.pdf>

reference document: policy004.pdf

"The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that schools not involve parents with "gender confuse"

## What can the schools do to support the parents/caregivers of gender variant youth?

Families are not always a safe place for gender variant youth. It is important not to involve the parents/caregivers of gender variant youth unless the youth themselves have already disclosed their identity to their families or you have a legal duty to report such as in the case of risk of self-harm. The gender variant youth may be put at risk within their homes if parents/caregivers who were unaware of their child's identity are approached by the school.

**2: Inclusive Environments - Inclusive learning environments—including SOGI-inclusive signage, word choices, and extra-curricular opportunities—create a positive and welcoming space for all students.**

**EXAMPLE 1:**

BRITISH COLUMBIA

reference hyperlink:

reference document page 124: inclusive001.pdf

"IN MY EXPERIENCE, THE BIGGEST BARRIERS FOR TEACHERS ADDRESSING LGBTQ ISSUES ARE NOT ANY FORMAL BARRIERS, BUT RATHER THEIR OWN PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES, WHICH SPREAD FROM ONE TEACHER TO ANOTHER -- FEARS OF GETTING "IN TROUBLE", OR HAVING PARENTS COMPLAIN SEEM TO BE A MAJOR BARRIER, YET IN MY EXPERIENCE, THE SCHOOL BOARD AND ADMIN. ARE VERY SUPPORTIVE OF INCLUSIVE ED, AND I'VE NEVER HAD A PARENT COMPLAIN -- AND IF THEY DID COMPLAIN, THAT WOULDN'T STOP ME, I WOULD JUST DEAL WITH THE COMPLAINT AND SAY "TOO BAD FOR YOU"

**EXAMPLE 2:**

BRITISH COLUMBIA

reference hyperlink:

reference document Page 1 (Lesson Plan 1b) and Page 2 (Lesson Plan 5a): inclusive002.pdf

"Tell participants that we are going to say the words out loud together at a count of three. Ensure that everyone shouts out "Lesbian," "Gay," "Bisexual," "Trans(gender)," and "Queer / Questioning."

"How can we change the conversation so that the questions no longer pertain. How do we create inclusive spaces and questions?"

"Draw a box on a white board. Let participants know that they are going to fill the box but that it will be erased at the end of the activity and the conversation stays within the room."

**5. Judgements**

- a. Draw a box on a white board. Let participants know that they are going to fill the box but that it will be erased at the end of the activity and the conversation stays within the room.
- b. Ask the participants what are some of the first impressions / assumptions that people make about them when they first meet them.
  - i. Put an example for yourself on the board to start the activity (i.e. Bossy)
  - ii. Ensure that participants fill the box (about 10-15 terms, minimum) before you discuss the items

### EXAMPLE 3:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

reference hyperlink: <https://www.bctf.ca/classroom-resources/details/learning-about-our-bodies>

reference document: inclusive003.pdf

"K3"

"Next the children are given an opportunity to draw male and female external genitals on outline figures. The teacher makes clear that these parts are private, that they may feel good when they are touched, that touching is done only

in private, and that, except for health reasons, no one has the right to touch someone else's private parts without permission."

"Take the bathing suit off the female drawing. a. Ask: "What parts are the private parts?" You might start with the breasts. If the children call out a slang name such as "boobs," accept it and add, "Now that you are growing up, you can use the grownup name "breasts."

"f. Point to the vulva (the outside genitals of the female) on the drawing. Ask the children if they know any names for this part."

"Fourth, draw a penis and testicles on the boy and a vulva on the girl."

5. Put the bathing suit back on the male doll, saying again that we keep these parts covered because they are private. Note that sometimes **people touch these parts because it feels good to touch them**, but because the parts are private, **they are touched only in private places**. Ask the children to suggest private places (i.e., their bedrooms and the bathroom).

Give each child a worksheet with two simple body outlines. Tell the group:

- Here are two outlines of bodies — one for a girl and the other for a boy. First, decide which one will be the boy and which one will be the girl. Then give each a face and hair.
  - Second, **give the boy and girl breasts**. (As children, boys and girls have breasts that look the same.)
  - Third, give each body a belly button or navel.
  - Fourth, **draw a penis and testicles on the boy and a vulva on the girl**.
7. When they are done, ask the children to show you their drawings so you can write in the names of each body part. Ask each child to name the parts as you label them.

**3: Teaching Resources - Lesson plans that teach diversity and respect and include examples of SOGI topics and 2SLGBTQ+ community members reflect the SOGI diversity in students' lives and society.**

EXAMPLE 1---

BRITISH COLUMBIA

reference hyperlink <https://bc.sogieducation.org/sogi3#elementary-lesson-plans>:

reference document: ressource001.pdf

**"Sex is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and YOU [Sexe, ce drôle de mot]** – Cory Silverberg

(Illus. Fiona Smyth) 2015

An essential comic-book style guide for children (ages 8 - 10) that looks at family makeup, gender identity, sexuality,

and bodies. The book will help open up conversations with adults—parents, teachers, librarians—and will give child

readers a space to discuss and explore their own bodies and identities."

**"Melissa** [previously published as George] – Alex Gino 2015 (GI)

When people see George, they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy, and she really wants to be seen

differently. When she finds out the school is casting a production of Charlotte's Web, she desperately wants to play

the part of Charlotte. But will she be allowed?"

**"I Am Jazz** – Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings (Illus. Shelagh McNicholas) 2014

A picture book based on the real-life experiences of Jazz Jennings, I Am Jazz explores what it is like to be born in a

body that doesn't fully match a child's internalized sense of their own gender. This book provides a valuable

opportunity for starting conversations with parents and children."

"

**SEX IS A FUNNY WORD** by Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth

**SEX IS A FUNNY WORD** by Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth



106

You may have discovered that touching some parts of your body, especially the middle parts, can make you feel warm and tingly.

Grown-ups call this kind of touch masturbation.

Masturbation is when we touch ourselves, usually our middle parts, to get that warm and tingly feeling.

Touching isn't just something we do with other people. We also touch ourselves.

We touch ourselves all the time, in all kinds of places, for all kinds of reasons.

Touching yourself is one way to learn about yourself, your body, and your feelings.

**EXAMPLE 2:**

BRITISH COLUMBIA

reference hyperlink: <https://www.sd43.bc.ca/Resources/ParentResources/Documents/SD43.SOGI-Information.pdf>

reference document: ressource002.pdf

"Are discussions about sex or sexual practices taking place in elementary classrooms?"

No, sexuality as a concept is discussed starting in grade 4 (with the onset of puberty) but does not include discussions about sexual acts or practices. Secondary students need accurate information about relationships and safe sex. Lack of information can have significant consequences for youth health and emotional wellbeing."

**EXAMPLE 3:**

BRITISH COLUMBIA

reference hyperlink:

<http://www.sd23.bc.ca/Documents/SOGI%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20Final.pdf>

reference document: ressource003.pdf

"Is SOGI 123 going to require teachers to teach my child sexually explicit acts?"

The simple answer is no. SOGI 123 is NOT Sexual Health Education. Sexual Health Education is Ministry approved curriculum that is embedded in the Physical Health Education and taught by specialist teachers for the elementary, middle and secondary school students. The Sexual Health Education curriculum is age appropriate, and is taught with sensitivity and has a focus on healthy relationships."

**THE GENDER QUEER** by Kobabe Maia

GENDER QUEER: A MEMOIR



## **THIS BOOK IS GAY** by Juno Dawson

A GOOD HANDIE is all about the wrist action. Rub the head of his cock back and forth with your hand. Try different speeds and pressures until he responds positively.

A BAD HANDIE is grasping a penis and shaking it like a ketchup bottle.

Finally, my misunderstanding about rubbing two peens together wasn't far off the mark—rubbing them together in one hand feels awesome—MEGA COMBOHANDIE (trademark pending).

## Doing the Sex

Two men can pleasure each other in a variety of fun ways.

1. **Handies:** Perhaps the most important skill you will master as a gay or bi man is the timeless classic, the hand job. The good news is, you can practice on yourself. The bad news is, each guy has become very used to his own way of getting himself off. Learning how to find a partner's personal style can take ages, but it can be very rewarding when you do.

Something they don't teach you in school is that, in order to be able to cum at all, you or your partner may need to finish off with a handie. A lot of people find it hard to cum through other types of sex. This is fine, and certainly not something you have to apologize for.

# THE EVERY TEACHER PROJECT

ON LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN CANADA'S K-12 SCHOOLS  
FINAL REPORT



**CATHERINE TAYLOR, PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG**

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The  
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# CONTENTS

<b>Figures</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Preface</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<i>Study background</i> .....	<b>2</b>
<i>Terms used in the report</i> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<i>Survey development</i> .....	<b>9</b>
<i>Data collection and recruitment</i> .....	<b>11</b>
<i>Sample size and participant demographics</i> .....	<b>11</b>
<i>Analysis</i> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Summary of results</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Detailed results</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<i>Perceptions of school climate</i> .....	<b>27</b>
Perception of school safety .....	<b>27</b>
Incidents of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic (HBTP) harassment .....	<b>30</b>
Awareness of students being subject to HBTP verbal harassment .....	<b>31</b>
Awareness of students being subject to HBTP physical harassment .....	<b>34</b>
Awareness of physical harassment based on sexual orientation .....	<b>35</b>
Awareness of physical harassment based on gender identity and expression .....	<b>36</b>
Harassment of students perceived to be LGBTQ and of heterosexual students .....	<b>39</b>
Homonegative and homophobic language .....	<b>41</b>
Transphobic and transnegative language .....	<b>44</b>
Overall estimates of abusive language use	

## CONTENTS CONT'D

by students and staff .....	<b>47</b>
Impact of HBTP harassment of students .....	<b>49</b>
Effectiveness in addressing harassment .....	<b>51</b>
Guidance counsellors, social workers, and psychologists .....	<b>56</b>
LGBTQ visibility at school .....	<b>59</b>
Awareness of LGBTQ students and staff at school .....	<b>59</b>
LGBTQ participation in school activities .....	<b>60</b>
GSAs .....	<b>62</b>
Events and resources .....	<b>65</b>
<i>Perspectives and practices</i> .....	<b>72</b>
Educators' perspectives and values .....	<b>72</b>
Homonegativity .....	<b>72</b>
Educators approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education .....	<b>76</b>
Educators accept responsibility for ensuring LGBTQ students' safety .....	<b>79</b>
Educators see LGBTQ rights as human rights .....	<b>83</b>
Educators support same-sex marriage .....	<b>84</b>
Educators support freedom of gender expression .....	<b>85</b>
It is personally important for educators to address LGBTQ issues .....	<b>86</b>
Comfort level in discussing LGBTQ topics with students .....	<b>88</b>
Subject areas where LGBTQ content applies .....	<b>91</b>
Practicing LGBTQ-inclusive education .....	<b>91</b>
School-level efforts .....	<b>91</b>
Classroom practices .....	<b>92</b>
Restrictions on LGBTQ-related content in the classroom .....	<b>94</b>
<i>Supports and barriers</i> .....	<b>95</b>
Internal factors .....	<b>95</b>
Teacher efficacy .....	<b>95</b>
Teacher efficacy scale .....	<b>97</b>
Personal attributes affecting effectiveness .....	<b>98</b>
Inhibiting factors .....	<b>100</b>
Mental health of educators .....	<b>102</b>
Childhood experiences with bullying .....	<b>103</b>
Educators in Catholic schools .....	<b>107</b>
Religious affiliation of participants .....	<b>109</b>
LGBTQ educators' experiences .....	<b>112</b>

## CONTENTS CONT'D

External factors .....	116
Personal connection with LGBTQ individuals .....	116
Student support for LGBTQ peers .....	117
Leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive education .....	118
Experiences of complaints about practicing LGBTQ-inclusive education .....	123
Job security and job status .....	126
Anticipated support .....	127
Support from teacher organizations .....	128
Support from legislation .....	129
Support from colleagues .....	131
Support from school administration .....	132
Schools with homophobic harassment policies .....	133
Schools with transphobic harassment policies .....	134
Safe schools policies .....	135
Training and professional development .....	136
B.Ed. or teacher education training .....	136
Practicum and student teaching .....	138
Graduate courses that included LGBTQ content .....	139
Professional development and resources offered by school or school district .....	140
Professional development and resources offered by teacher organizations .....	143
Other available resources .....	145
Perceived value of school system interventions for LGBTQ students .....	148
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>154</b>
<i>Recommended actions</i> .....	<b>155</b>
For government and school districts .....	<b>155</b>
For school administrators .....	<b>157</b>
For teacher organizations .....	<b>157</b>
For teacher education programs .....	<b>158</b>
For employers .....	<b>159</b>
For religious organizations .....	<b>160</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>161</b>
<b>Legislation and policy references</b> .....	<b>163</b>

# FIGURES

- Figure 1:** Provincial and territorial sample sizes ..... 13
- Figure 2:** Educators’ perceptions of school safety ..... 27
- Figure 3:** School safety for LGB and transgender students (by region) ..... 29
- Figure 4:** Awareness of HBTP incidents in the past 12 months ..... 31
- Figure 5:** Educators’ perceptions versus LGBTQ students’ experiences  
of harassment ..... 38
- Figure 6:** Frequency of comments from students ..... 41
- Figure 7:** Prevalence of homonegative comments (by school size) ..... 43
- Figure 8:** Educators’ percentage estimates of students using abusive language ... 47
- Figure 9:** Frequency of intervention when comments made by students ..... 51
- Figure 10:** Effectiveness in addressing incidents of harassment generally ..... 54
- Figure 11:** Effectiveness in addressing incidents of homophobic harassment ... 54
- Figure 12:** Effectiveness in addressing incidents of transphobic harassment .... 55
- Figure 13:** Educators’ awareness of HBTP incidents in past 12 months  
(by occupation) ..... 57
- Figure 14:** Percentage of schools with GSAs (by highest grade offered at school) .. 63
- Figure 15:** Participation in LGBTQ-awareness days (by school location) ..... 67
- Figure 16:** Homonegativity scale - positive items ..... 72
- Figure 17:** Homonegativity scale - negative items ..... 73
- Figure 18:** Agreement that “LGBTQ people seem to focus on the ways  
in which they differ from heterosexuals and ignore the ways they  
are the same” (by region) ..... 74

## FIGURES cont'd

<b>Figure 19:</b> Support for LGBTQ-inclusive education (by grade) .....	<b>77</b>
<b>Figure 20:</b> Conceptions of safety (by region) .....	<b>82</b>
<b>Figure 21:</b> Support for freedom of gender expression (by region) .....	<b>87</b>
<b>Figure 22:</b> Teachers' comfort in discussing LGBTQ topics (by grade taught) .....	<b>89</b>
<b>Figure 23:</b> Teacher efficacy scale .....	<b>97</b>
<b>Figure 24:</b> Attributes affecting effectiveness as an educator .....	<b>99</b>
<b>Figure 25:</b> Reasons why respondents were harassed as minors .....	<b>104</b>
<b>Figure 26:</b> Agreement that religiously opposed teachers should be able to opt out of LGBTQ-inclusive education (by religious service attendance) .....	<b>111</b>
<b>Figure 27:</b> Agreement that "Discussing LGBTQ issues with my students would jeopardize my job" (by region) .....	<b>127</b>
<b>Figure 28:</b> Anticipated support (by source of support) .....	<b>128</b>
<b>Figure 29:</b> Confidence that current legislation would be supportive (by province/territory) .....	<b>129</b>
<b>Figure 30:</b> Number of B.Ed. courses with LGBTQ content .....	<b>137</b>
<b>Figure 31:</b> Number of graduate courses with LGBTQ content .....	<b>140</b>
<b>Figure 32:</b> Awareness of teacher organization committees or cohorts on LGBTQ issues (by province/territory) .....	<b>145</b>
<b>Figure 33:</b> Awareness of teacher organization resource staff focused on LGBTQ issues (by province/territory) .....	<b>146</b>
<b>Figure 34:</b> Awareness and use of other resources on LGBTQ education .....	<b>147</b>
<b>Figure 35:</b> Perceived value of school system interventions for LGBTQ students .....	<b>149</b>

# [FOREWORD]

**T**he Manitoba Teachers' Society has been privileged to be a committed partner from the beginning of the Every Teacher Project. We have supported this important work through an advisory committee of MTS staff officers and Manitoba teachers, who met with the researchers and advised at every stage of the project. We have provided direct funding and communications support. We have helped recruit participants – including almost 10% of our own membership – to participate in the online survey, and we reached out to all teacher organizations in the publicly funded school systems of Canada to invite them to participate. We worked with our sister organizations to ensure that their members would hear about the Every Teacher Project survey and that their voices could be heard. We have done so with pleasure!

While MTS has long held that LGBTQ-inclusive education needs to be a key focus in providing safe and supportive environments for both students and educators, we were pleased to be able to provide our practical support to the Every Teacher Project. We are proud of Canadian teachers' work on behalf of LGBTQ students and staff, and we congratulate the Every Teacher Project team on this fine contribution to understanding Canadian teachers' experiences and expertise on LGBTQ-inclusive education.



**Norm Gould**

*President*

The Manitoba Teachers' Society

# [PREFACE]

Ten years ago, LGBTQ-inclusive education was rarely addressed beyond a few major Canadian cities and school divisions. Educators who recognized its importance were virtually on their own in most school systems. Since that time, media attention to the suicides of bullied LGBTQ youth has brought the issue of the safety of LGBTQ-identified students from the back burner to the front, leading to the development of policies that emphasize detection and punishment of homophobic and transphobic harassment. More recently, some provinces and school officials have come to realize that student safety cannot be fostered through reactive and punitive measures alone, pursuing safety, instead, by fostering inclusive school cultures.

This shift in emphasis is reflected in recent school district policy and provincial legislation. For example, the Government of Manitoba (2014) amended *The Public Schools Act* to require all publicly funded schools to implement safe *and* inclusive policies for LGBTQ students; the *Ontario Accepting Schools Act* (2012) mandated that school boards develop equity policies and support student-led groups aimed at promoting inclusivity, including Gay-Straight Alliances. Alberta was the most recent province to introduce this kind of legislation in 2015. In Québec, Bill 56, *An Act to Prevent and Stop Bullying and Violence in Schools*, was unanimously passed in 2012, requiring public and private schools to develop action plans to end bullying—including that which is based on sexual orientation, sexual identity, and homophobia. Vancouver School Board (2014a, 2014b) has recently revised its LGBTQ-inclusive education policy to reflect best practices in transgender accommodation and inclusion; and, while not amending their provincial legislation, the government of New Brunswick has nonetheless gone one step further than Ontario or Manitoba by instituting a ministerial policy requiring schools to provide a GSA when requested not only by students but by anyone.

However, education policy and law cannot be effective unless the people doing the educating—teachers, school officials and counsellors—are on board. In the Every Teacher Project we set out

to investigate the perspectives of Canadian educators on the safety and inclusion of LGBTQ students and topics in schools. Our analysis of survey data found that educators share the perspective that safety and inclusion go hand in hand. Almost three-quarters of survey participants chose “Inclusion” instead of “Security” and “Regulation” in answer to the question, “What does school safety mean to you?” Our analysis attests that Canadian educators understand that the safety of marginalized students depends on their inclusion as fully respected members of the school community.

This perspective of inclusivity as necessary to safety is evident in teacher organizations as well. In many ways, and for many years, teacher organizations have often led the way (alongside progressive school districts) towards LGBTQ inclusion by developing curricular resources, offering professional development for their members, defending members in conflicts with school system officials involving LGBTQ rights, and consulting with government. This leadership reflects teacher organizations’ awareness of the challenges affecting their membership: the teachers, counsellors, education assistants, administrators, and other educators who work directly with LGBTQ students and witness their marginalization, and with members who identify as LGBTQ. They also understand that inclusion of LGBTQ students takes work. Even in 2015, given LGBTQ students’ long and ongoing history of exclusion, both systemic and systematic, from all aspects of official school life, as well as their extreme marginalization in unofficial school life, the persistence of organized opposition to their right to a safe and inclusive education continues.



# [ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS]

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Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens

British Columbia Teachers' Federation

Canadian Teachers' Federation / Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Manitoba Teachers' Society

New Brunswick Teachers' Association / Association des enseignantes et des enseignants francophone du Nouveau-Brunswick

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

Northwest Territories Teachers' Association

Nova Scotia Teachers' Union

Nunavut Teachers' Association

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation / Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario

Ontario Teachers' Federation / Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario

Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation

Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers / Association provinciale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

Yukon Teachers' Association

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# [INTRODUCTION]

**T**his report presents the results of the online survey phase of the “Every Teacher Project” on Canadian K-12 educators’ perceptions and experiences of “LGBTQ-inclusive” education, including curriculum, policies, and practices that include positive and accurate information about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit, and queer people as well as issues related to gender and sexual diversity (also known as GSD-inclusive education). This type of education is inclusive of students who would otherwise be marginalized by school climates that are typically hostile to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit, or queer students, or students questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity (LGBTQ); to students who have LGBTQ parents, friends or other loved ones; and to cisgender heterosexual (CH) students who can also be directly or indirectly affected by homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. The project surveyed thousands of educators in the school year ending June 2013. We will report on the focus group phase of the Every Teacher Project in 2016.

## STUDY BACKGROUND

The Every Teacher Project was conceived as a “knowledge mobilization” study that aimed to collect the dispersed expertise and insights of participants and bring it forward through systematic analysis. As such, the Every Teacher Project recognizes the varied contexts of educators striving for LGBTQ inclusion across the country, some with supportive colleagues and school officials, others working alone in hostile or indifferent conditions, and still others feeling unable to work inclusively without violating their personal belief systems or jeopardizing their employment. The project set out to answer the following questions:

1. What are diversely situated Canadian educators’ experiences and perceptions of this work?
2. How do they see the climate of their schools for LGBTQ students?
3. Do they approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education?
4. Do they practice it? In what ways?
5. What helps them do this work and what holds them back?
6. Do educators’ own social identities (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, etc.) make a difference?
7. Does type of school (e.g., size, location, religious/secular, socioeconomic characteristics) make a difference?
8. And finally, what conditions would need to be in place to help more teachers practice LGBTQ-inclusive education?

## TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

### EDUCATION TERMS

**Early Years / Middle Years / Senior Years** – Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 4 / Grades 5 to 8 / Grades 9 to 12.

**Educator** – As used in this report, “educator” refers not only to teachers but also to guidance counsellors, teachers with administrative duties, and education assistants.

**Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA)** – A club or support group located in schools that typically provides a safe space and increases support for/visibility of LGBTQ students.

**Guidance Counsellors** – Guidance counsellors, as used in this report, refers to guidance counsellors, school social workers, and school psychologists.

**Homophobic Harassment Policy** – Policy that provides guidance to school staff on how to address incidents of harassment or bullying based on sexual orientation.

**Inclusive Education** – The term will be familiar to educators because it has been a mainstay of teacher education in Canada for decades. Broadly defined, inclusive education encompasses the pedagogical, curricular, and programmatic practices designed to ensure that every child feels safe and respected at school and is able to benefit from the educational services offered. The language of inclusion is increasingly

common in school system policy and legislation. Where the focus was once on safety, narrowly defined as protection from bullies, there is now widespread recognition that addressing harassment is not enough to create the conditions in which students will not be bullied, let alone feel respected and able to learn. Thus, for example, Manitoba’s (2013) amendment to *The Public Schools Act* is named “Safe and Inclusive Schools,” and positions bullying as a problem of non-inclusive, disrespectful school climates.

**LGBTQ-inclusive Education** – We use the term LGBTQ-inclusive education to describe curriculum, policies, and practices that include positive, accurate information about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two Spirit, queer and questioning people as well as issues related to gender and sexual diversity (GSD), also known as GSD-inclusive education.

**Transphobic Harassment Policy** – Policy that provides guidance to school staff on how to address incidents of harassment or bullying based on transgender/gender identity or gender expression.

## IDENTITY TERMS

**CH** – Cisgender heterosexual

**Cisgender** – A person whose gender identity aligns with conventional social expectations for the sex assigned to them at birth (e.g., a cisgender man is someone who identifies as a man and who was assigned male sex at birth). (In this report, the terms “male” and “female” refer to sex assigned at birth; “man,” “woman” and “transgender” are used to refer to gender identity.)

**FNMI** – The Indigenous peoples of Canada: First Nations, Métis and Inuit; referred to in some literature and by the federal government as “Aboriginal.” This report analyzes ethnic differences using the categories FNMI, other racialized groups, and White.

**Gender** – Gender is a system that operates in a social context to classify people, often based on their assigned sex. In many contexts this takes the form of a binary classification of either “man” or “woman”; in other contexts, this includes a broader spectrum. (In this report, the terms “male” and “female” refer to sex assigned at birth; “man,” “woman” and “transgender” are used to refer to gender identity.)

**Gender Expression** – The way a person presents and communicates gender within a social context. Gender can be expressed through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or

behaviours, which are often associated with masculinity and femininity. The ways in which gender is expressed are culturally specific and may change over time. May also be referred to as gender presentation or gender performance.

**Gender Identity** – A person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender. This could include an internal sense of being a man, woman, androgynous, neither or some other gender. A person’s gender may or may not correspond with social expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, it is not necessarily visible to others. “Affirmed gender” is a term used for the gender an individual identifies as, regardless of sex assigned at birth. (In this report, the terms “male” and “female” refer to sex assigned at birth; “man,” “woman” and “transgender” are used to refer to gender identity.)

**Heterosexual** – Traditionally, heterosexuality assumed the sex/gender binary to be accurate and referred to an individual’s exclusive attraction to the “opposite” sex. In other words, heterosexual orientation referred to a cisgender man’s attraction to a cisgender woman, and vice versa. Some transgender, non-binary and intersex people may also identify as heterosexual. (Also, commonly referred to as “straight.”)

**Homosexual** – Unlike heterosexual, the term homosexual is strongly associated with pathologizing and oppressive meanings from

medical, legal and religious discourses and is generally not used in the LGBTQ community. In this report, the acronym LGB is used.

**Indigenous** – In Canada, people who identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit (FNMI). This term is preferred by many FNMI people to the official federal government term “Aboriginal.”

**LGBTQ** – Stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Two Spirit, Queer and Questioning. These terms and the acronym “LGBTQ” are used in the study to refer to sexual orientations and gender identities that differ from the dominant cultural norms of cisgender heterosexuality. However, these terms are broad classifications intended to encompass a wide spectrum of identities related to gender and sexuality. We use them for analytical convenience, recognizing that there are many other related terms that individuals may self-select to describe their sense of identity. We recognize that individual sexual and gender identities are much more nuanced than these categories. For example, individuals may identify as “pansexual” rather than “bisexual” to recognize the potential for attraction to sexes and/or genders that exist across a spectrum and to challenge the sex/gender binary. Others may identify as “gender-free” or “agender” because they find the term “transgender” too restricted by the parameters of the sex/gender binary. However, very few participants in this

study elected the write-in option of “other,” or “choose not to answer,” which suggests that most participants in this could see themselves, if only crudely, in one of the broad-stroke categories offered.

**Racialized Groups** – “Race” refers to the invention of different subspecies of people based on physical and cultural characteristics such as skin colour, accent or manner of speech, name, clothing, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences, places of origin and so forth. Racialization, then, is “the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life” (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2005, p. 11). Recognizing that race is a social construct, this study describes people as “racialized persons” or “racialized groups” instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms “racial minority,” “visible minority,” or “non-White.” FNMI participants are not included in this category because there were sufficient FNMI participants to analyze their data separately.

**Sex / Assigned Sex** – The classification of a person as male, female or intersex based on biological characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia and reproductive organs. Most often, sex is assigned by a medical professional at birth and is based on a visual assessment of external genitalia.

**Sex/Gender Binary** – The notion that there are only two possible sexes (male/female) and genders (man/woman), that they are opposite, distinct and uniform categories, and that they naturally align as male/man and female/woman (in other words, that gender is determined by sex).

**Sexual Orientation** – Sexual orientation classifies a person’s potential for emotional, intellectual, spiritual, intimate, romantic, and/or sexual interest in other people, often based on their sex and/or gender. Also known as attraction, this may form the basis for aspects of one’s identity (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, etc.) and/or behaviour.

**They / Them / Their** – This report follows the emerging practice of using the plural pronouns “they,” “them,” and “their” as singular gender-inclusive pronouns (e.g., “The teacher taught their class”) to incorporate the evolution of language that seeks to expand the gender binary, particularly as it is constructed linguistically.

**Transgender or Trans** – A person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender conventionally associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. Transgender (or trans) is often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions (e.g., a person assigned male at birth who expresses femininity and identifies as a woman, a person who identifies as genderqueer or gender fluid).

**Transsexual** – A person who does not identify with the gender conventionally associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. This term is most frequently associated with movement from one side of the gender binary to the other. Many transsexual people feel a strong need to access medical transition to physically alter their bodies (e.g., hormone therapies and/or gender-affirming surgeries). For some people, this is a stigmatizing term because of its historical association with the pathologization of gender-diverse people, and the implication that a person’s gender identity is not valid unless they medically transition.

**Two Spirit** – An umbrella term that reflects the many words used in different Indigenous languages to affirm the interrelatedness of multiple aspects of identity, including gender, sexuality, community, culture and spirituality. Prior to the imposition of the sex/gender binary by European colonizers, many Indigenous cultures recognized Two Spirit people as respected members of their communities and accorded them special status as visionaries, healers and medicine people based upon their unique abilities to understand and move between masculine and feminine perspectives. Some Indigenous people identify as Two Spirit rather than, or in addition to, identifying as LGBTQ.

## **TERMS FOR SYSTEMS OF PRIVILEGE AND MARGINALIZATION**

***Biphobia*** – Fear and/or hatred of bisexuality, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence; anyone who is or is assumed to be bisexual or experiences attraction to multiple sexes and/or genders can be the target of biphobia. The hostility experienced by bisexual people has often been reduced to their same-sex attractions, with their heterosexual attractions regarded as a protective factor. However, research has shown that bisexual people are subject to levels of hostility similar to (but in some ways different from) those directed at gay and lesbian people. (Note: We will be analyzing the experience of bisexual participants in a future report.)

***Cisnormativity / Gender Normativity*** – A cultural and societal bias, often unconscious, that privileges cisgender identities and gender norms, and ignores or underrepresents trans identities and/ or gender diversity by assuming that all people are cisgender and will express their gender in a way that aligns with conventional norms. Cisnormativity is very evident in most schools and is regulated through transphobic practices.

***Heteronormativity*** – A cultural and societal bias, often unconscious, that privileges heterosexuality and ignores or underrepresents diversity in attraction

and behaviour by assuming all people are heterosexual.

***Heterosexism*** – Prejudice and discrimination in favour of heterosexuality. This includes the presumption of heterosexuality as the superior and more desirable form of attraction.

***Homonegativity*** – A negative attitude towards LGB people and relationships. Homonegativity is often distinguished from homophobia as being attitudinal rather than emotional in nature. In the context of this report, homonegativity is used to characterize language such as “That’s so gay” that is insulting to LGB people and contributes to a hostile climate, whether such effects are intended or not.

***Homophobia*** – Hostile feelings towards LGB people such as contempt, fear, or hatred. Often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence, homophobia can target anyone who is, or is perceived as being, LGBTQ. Although it was once attributed to natural revulsion against perverse sexuality, homophobia can often be explained by an individual’s attachment to a community that strongly stigmatizes LGB identity. Canadian and American polls show that homophobia is rather quickly diminishing in the general population. In the context of this report, the term refers to actions that aggressively target individuals by harassment or exclusion.

**HBTP** – Homophobic, biphobic, and/or transphobic.

**Intersectionality** – The concept of the interacting effects of the various aspects of an individual’s identity and social positioning—such as race, class, gender, dis/ability and sexual orientation—has been key to this project from its inception. Historically, much research has been conducted by comparing the experiences of differently situated people within a single category (e.g., comparing men and women within the category sex), which glosses over important differences (e.g., women living in poverty vs. affluent women). More recently, efforts have been made to understand the complexity of real life, where multiple categories intersect in our lives (e.g., affluent women may experience sexism very differently from the way women living in poverty do).

**Transnegativity** – A negative attitude towards transgender people and gender expression that falls outside the male-masculine/female-feminine conventions. Transnegativity is often distinguished from transphobia as being attitudinal rather than emotional in nature. In the context of this report, transnegativity is used to characterize language that is insulting to transgender people and contributes to a hostile climate, whether such effects are intended or not.

**Transphobia** – Fear and/or hatred of any transgression of perceived gender norms, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence. Anyone who is, or is perceived to be, trans and/or gender diverse can be the target of transphobia. Homophobia and transphobia are strongly connected, as is seen when people are punished for departing from conventional expectations for their assigned sex (e.g., the masculine girl, the stay-at-home dad) by being stigmatized as “homosexual,” “fags,” etc. In the context of this report, transphobia refers to actions that aggressively target individuals by harassment or exclusion.

# [METHODOLOGY]

## SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

**W**orking as an interdisciplinary team of researchers from Education, Gender Studies, Law and Sociology, we designed a multi-modal research program comprising an online survey and focus groups to investigate the question, “What are Canadian educators’ experiences and perspectives on LGBTQ-inclusive education?” To develop the survey, we conducted a literature review of all previous related studies in English-speaking countries and drafted a questionnaire that reflected relevant findings from those studies as well as our own research.<sup>1</sup> We worked closely through several versions of the questionnaire with our Advisory Committee of members of the Manitoba Teachers’ Society, including representatives of MTS staff, executive, and membership, to ensure that the survey resonated with their knowledge of school systems and related issues.

In designing the survey, we were mindful that while most members of teacher organizations were classroom teachers, others are subject specialists, counsellors, education assistants, and teachers with administrative functions. We therefore designed the survey to direct participants to subsets of questions relevant to their positions (within 15 subgroup categories). In order to facilitate subgroup and intersectionality analyses, the survey included 20 personal demographic questions on multiple aspects of identity and social location, and an additional 70 questions (10 of them open-ended) addressing perceptions of and experiences of school climate for LGBTQ students and LGBTQ-inclusive education practices in their own work contexts. These questions solicited their perceptions and experiences on a range of topics including school safety and incidents of harassment; LGBTQ rights and LGBTQ-inclusive education; LGBTQ-inclusive education practices; LGBTQ visibility; support from various stakeholders; policies in

<sup>1</sup> In our development of the survey, we acknowledge the permissions granted by authors of the following research to adapt their survey questions for the purposes of our study: Harris Interactive & GLSEN (2005); Hoy & Woolfolk (1993); Keyes (2002); Meyer (2008); Morrison & Morrison (2011); and Schneider & Dimito (2008).

place regarding harassment, safety and inclusion; and level of training in implementing LGBTQ-inclusive policies and education practices. An additional 5 questions were asked of counsellors, social workers, and psychologists. Survey respondents who completed the short survey could opt to answer an additional 57 questions (6 of them open-ended). This second set of questions (the “long” version) covered the same range of topics, but shifted the focus to more detailed questions about educator perceptions and experiences. For example, the second section included questions about educators’ training, more details about safe schools and safe school committees, and LGBTQ student involvement in schools. This report presents the findings of the short and long versions of the survey. We will present additional analyses as sub-reports available online.

The survey was offered in both English and French through an online survey instrument hosted by FluidSurveys. Before pretesting the questionnaire, we applied for and received research ethics approval from project leader Catherine Taylor’s institution, The University of Winnipeg and subsequently from team members’ institutions, the University of Manitoba (Drs. Peter, Ristock and Short) and Concordia University (Dr. Meyer). We pretested the questionnaire particularly thoroughly because of the complexity of the survey structure, first with our advisory committee of MTS members, then with the Egale Canada Human Rights Trust Education Committee, and finally with a group of 70 K-12 teachers. We subsequently refined the questionnaire to correct skipping patterns and address issues such as clarity.

## DATA COLLECTION AND RECRUITMENT

Data were collected during the 2012-13 school year (specifically, collection commenced on October 11, 2012 and concluded on July 7, 2013). Survey participants were recruited through direct contact with national, provincial and territorial teacher organizations across Canada, which agreed to recruit survey participants from their memberships. Teacher organizations contacted their membership through direct emailing, website promotion, newsletter and information releases, and word of mouth, and participants were given an organization-specific link to access the survey. We monitored participation by organization and communicated with designated staff members to request follow-up contacts where needed to correct under-representation.

## SAMPLE SIZE AND PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Over 3400 educators participated in the standard survey, with a final sample of 3319 after data cleaning (of these, 1725 (52%) went on to complete the additional questions involved in the “long” version of the survey). In many respects, participation levels map onto what we know of the Canadian teaching demographic:

- ⇒ 71% identified as women, 26% identified as men, and 3% as transgender. The average age of educators was 41.4 years. These demographic characteristics are closely representative of the Canadian teaching population, which is 75% women and has an average age of 45 (*Canadian Teacher*, 2014).
- ⇒ 3% of respondents were transgender (i.e., self-identified as transgender, transsexual, gender neutral, gender free, and/or indicated a gender different from their assigned sex at birth, such as a someone who identified as a woman and was assigned male at birth). Where numbers permitted we conducted analyses comparing the responses of transgender and cisgender participants.
- ⇒ Although there are no reliable population data on the number of LGBTQ Canadians, let alone the number of LGBTQ educators, at 16% of unweighted survey participants, LGBTQ representation is consistent with the upper end of most LGBTQ population estimates, and provides a strong subset for analysis.

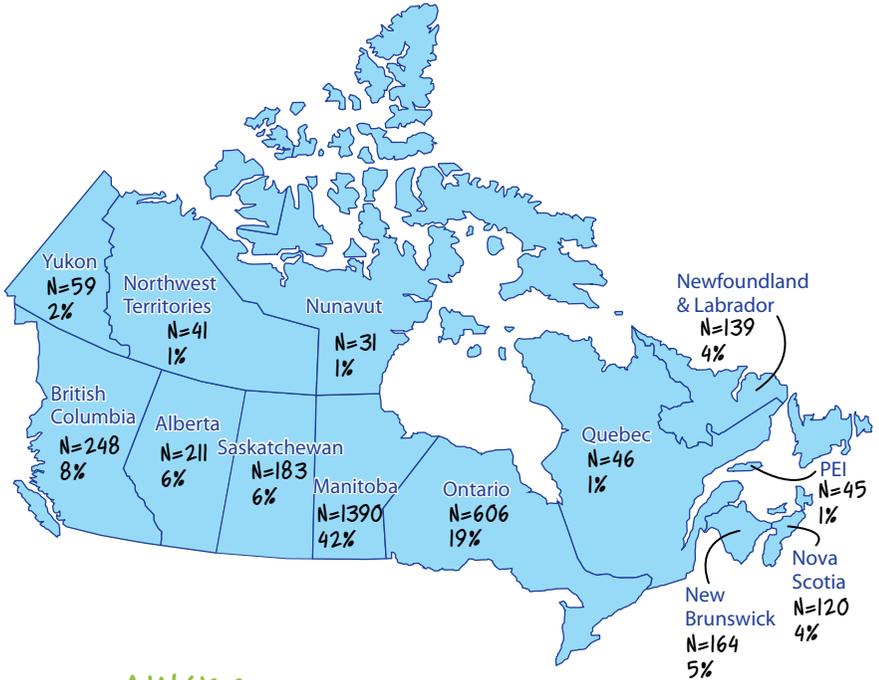
⇒ Representation of Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) educators is roughly proportional to the Canadian population at 7% (compared to 4% of the Canadian population). Other racialized groups are somewhat underrepresented (4% compared to 19% of the Canadian population) (Canada, 2013). (We use Canadian population as a comparator in the absence of reliable data on the numbers of Indigenous or other racialized teachers in Canada.)

⇒ Participation was proportionally distributed across Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. Typical grade spans of individual schools differ across the country, but for purposes of analysis in this report, we sometimes group participants into early years (Pre-K to Grade 4), middle years (Grades 5-8), and senior years (Grades 9-12).

⇒ Because of the strong partnership with The Manitoba Teachers' Society, Manitoba was over-represented in the sample; data were weighted by provincial/territorial teaching population to correctly reflect their proportion of the Canadian teaching population (except in analyses of regional or provincial/territorial results, which are based on unweighted data). In addition, an unanticipated survey concurrently conducted in Québec resulted in lower participation in that province. (Québec data have been combined with data from the Atlantic provinces in regional analyses in this report.)

Provincial and Territorial unweighted sample sizes are shown in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1: PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL SAMPLE SIZES (UNWEIGHTED)**



## ANALYSIS

Quantitative data were analyzed through univariate frequency distributions (with relevant measures of central tendency where appropriate) and bivariate descriptive statistics (i.e., cross-tabulations and difference of means) that compared the responses of various groups of participants (e.g., LGBTQ and CH).

For reasons of accessibility to a broad readership, this report presents descriptive statistics only and presents findings in whole numbers (note: discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding); however, all differences reported here are statistically significant to  $p < 0.05$ . Please see the peer-reviewed publications listed at the end of this report for further information on the statistical analyses performed and results of significance testing (see Meyer, Taylor, & Peter, 2014; Taylor, Peter, Meyer, Ristock, Short, & Campbell, 2015).

## CREATED VARIABLES

One of the aims of the Every Teacher Project was to understand the widely differing contexts and personal factors that affected educators' experiences and perceptions of LGBTQ-inclusive education. To that end, we asked questions that enabled us to conduct an extensive set of bivariate analyses. Our comparisons included:

- ⇒ LGBTQ versus cisgender heterosexual (CH)
- ⇒ Cisgender men versus cisgender women versus transgender
- ⇒ White versus FNMI versus racialized group
- ⇒ Age of educator
- ⇒ Teachers versus school guidance counsellors/psychologists/social workers versus school administrators (principal, vice-principal, and support staff)
- ⇒ Employment status (permanent contract versus term, occasional, casual, or substitute positions)
- ⇒ City or suburban area (city greater than 100,000 or suburb) versus small city and non-remote town (city of 10,000 to 100,000 or small town or rural area within 150 kilometres of a city with a population over 100,000) versus remote/rural/reserve/AFB (town of less than 10,000 more than 150 kilometres from a city with a population over 150,000, rural area, First Nations reserve, or Armed Forces Base [AFB])
- ⇒ School size by number of students (250 or fewer students vs. 251 to 500 students vs. 501 to 750 students vs. 751 to 1000 students vs. over 1000 students)
- ⇒ Early-years educator/school (Pre-K to Grade 4) versus middle-years educator/school (Grades 5 to 8) versus senior-years educator/school (Grades 9 to 12)
- ⇒ Schools with homophobic harassment policy versus schools without such policy
  - » Level of training received on these policies (i.e., no training or insufficient training vs. policy with some training, but would have liked more vs. policy with adequate training or very well prepared)
- ⇒ Schools with transphobic harassment policy versus schools without such policy
  - » Level of training received on these policies (i.e., no training or insufficient training vs. policy with some training, but would have liked more vs. policy with adequate training or very well prepared)
- ⇒ Percentage of students at school that come from low-income families (less than 10% vs. 10% to 24% vs. 25% to 49% vs. 50% to 74% vs. 75% and over)

- ⇒ Ethnic composition of school
  - » Percent First Nations, Métis, or Inuit (less than 10% vs. 10% to 24% vs. 25% to 49% vs. 50% to 74% vs. 75% and over)
  - » Percent from racialized groups (less than 10% vs. 10% to 24% vs. 25% to 49% vs. 50% to 74% vs. 75% and over)
  - » Percent White (less than 10% vs. 10% to 24% vs. 25% to 49% vs. 50% to 74% vs. 75% and over)
- ⇒ Main language of instruction at school (English vs. French vs. English and French)
- ⇒ Catholic school versus secular (i.e., non-religious) school
  - » Note: because only a small percentage of participants worked in religious schools that were not Catholic, most of our parochial/secular analyses focus on Catholic versus secular schools only.

The Every Teacher survey asked a series of detailed questions pertaining to the current religious affiliation of respondents. For instance, for the Abrahamic or monotheistic religions (i.e. Christianity, Islam, and Judaism), we asked follow-up questions in order to record the specific religion of respondents (e.g., Christianity – Protestant Anabaptist). In total, we identified 52 different religious affiliations, including: none, atheist, agnostic,

spiritual (non-religious), First Nations spirituality, Pagan/earth-based, Unitarian Universalism, eastern religions, Baha'i, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism. Because we had such a detailed account of current religious affiliation, we created a new variable based on whether or not educators' current religion was generally supportive of same-sex marriage, which resulted in the following categories: approves, mixed views, opposes, no formal religion, and religious but specific religion is unknown. In other analyses, we report on respondents whose current religious denomination is Catholic versus those who are not, and participants who currently identify with a Protestant denomination (including Anglicans) versus those who do not.

In addition to the above mentioned variables, several attitudinal questions were included as independent measures and included in bivariate analyses. These questions and respective responses include:

- ⇒ How do you feel about LGBTQ-inclusive education? Responses included "Approve," "Neutral," and "Oppose."
- ⇒ Do your religious or spiritual beliefs influence your decisions about LGBTQ issues? Responses included "Yes, strongly," "Yes, a little or somewhat," and "Not at all."

In order to investigate incidents of harassment in more detail, a composite measure of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic (HBTP) harassment was created from an overall count of whether or not educators were aware of students being verbally harassed based on one of the following criteria: being LGB, being perceived to be LGB, being transgender, being a boy who acts “too much like a girl,” and being a girl who acts “too much like a boy.” A second measure was created for physical harassment based on the same criteria.

Finally, we provide regional breakdowns, which are based on unweighted data. In some cases, we report on each province and territory separately; however, due to sample size constraints, most comparisons were conducted according to geographical region. These regions include: British Columbia; Alberta and Saskatchewan; Manitoba; Ontario; Québec and the Atlantic provinces; and the three territories plus Labrador. Due to the low participation from the province of Québec, this province had to be included with the Atlantic region. Conversely, due to the large participation from Manitoba, we left it as its own region. We decided to combine Labrador with the Territories due to the remoteness of all jurisdictions.

# [SUMMARY OF RESULTS]

**A**mong the key findings of the Every Teacher Project on LGBTQ-Inclusive Education are the following:

Large numbers of educators were aware of HBTP harassment and exclusion of LGBTQ students, students perceived to be LGBTQ, and heterosexual students. Most were aware of the presence of LGBTQ students.

- ⇒ **Safety.** Almost all educators (97%) considered their school to be safe but when they were asked questions that focus on the safety of LGBTQ students the numbers dropped substantially, especially for transgender students. LGBTQ participants and FNMI or other racialized participants were even more likely than CH or White participants to see their schools as unsafe for LGBTQ students.
- ⇒ **Harassment.** Participants were aware of HBTP exclusion and harassment of all kinds, ranging from two-thirds aware of verbal harassment in the past twelve months to one in five aware of sexual humiliation. Awareness was strongly correlated to participant characteristics, including identifying as a man, LGBTQ or FNMI; working as a guidance counsellor; approving of LGBTQ-inclusive education; or affiliation with a faith that approves of same-sex marriage. Awareness was not always strongly correlated to school characteristics; e.g., participants from Catholic schools were just as aware as those from secular schools of incidents of HBTP harassment; early-years, middle-years and senior-years educators were similar in their awareness (e.g., 62%, 65% and 71% respectively aware of verbal harassment). However, participants from low SES school populations were much more likely to be aware of HBTP verbal and physical harassment.
- ⇒ **Harassment of perceived LGBTQ and heterosexual students.** Many participants reported awareness of HBTP harassment of students perceived to be LGBTQ (e.g., 56% of Ontario participants aware) and of heterosexual students (e.g., 42% of Ontario participants).
- ⇒ **Impact of HBTP harassment.** Over half (55%) of the participants who reported being aware of HBTP harassment were also aware of the harassment leading to self-harming behaviours among LGBTQ students.

⇒ **HBTP harassment policy.** Participants who felt they had been well prepared to enact HBTP harassment policies were much less likely to be aware of such harassment, which suggests that policies coupled with training reduces the incidence of harassment.

⇒ **Homonegative comments such as “That’s so gay.”** Although LGBTQ students constitute a small minority of any school population, educators were even more likely to hear homonegative remarks frequently (49% heard daily or weekly) than to hear sexist remarks aimed at girls (41%) or remarks about body-size or appearance (36%). LGBTQ participants were somewhat more likely (56%) to report frequently hearing homonegative comments than CH participants (47%).

⇒ **Intervention.** Most participants reported always intervening when they heard verbal harassment of any kind. They were most likely to always intervene in incidents of homophobic comments (such as “faggot”) and least likely in incidents of sexist remarks aimed at boys (such as “boys are stupid”). Only 30% of educators felt that their schools responded effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment, with participants from cities/suburban areas more likely than those from smaller communities, and Catholic school educators less likely than

secular school educators. Participants who felt well prepared to implement their school’s HBTP harassment policy were far more likely to see their school as intervening effectively than those from schools with no policy or inadequate training on using the policy.

⇒ **Educator use of homonegative and homophobic comments.** One in five participants overall reported hearing teachers make homonegative comments such as “that’s so gay” at school, with likelihood higher among Catholic school participants (28%) and Ontario participants (also 28%). A third of participants (34%) reported having heard teachers use homophobic remarks such as “faggot” and “dyke” at school. LGBTQ participants were more likely than CH to have heard teachers using such language, and racialized were more likely than white or FNMI.

⇒ **Transnegative comments.** Participants were more likely to report awareness of harassment of boys for acting like a girl (50%) than of girls for acting like a boy (30%). Transgender participants were more likely than cisgender participants to hear such comments. Participants in schools with transphobic harassment policies were much less likely to hear such comments, and far less likely if they had been well trained in the policy.

⇒ **Presence of LGBTQ students.** Most Catholic school and secular school participants were aware of the presence of LGB students in their schools, although educators from cities and suburban areas were much more likely to be aware than those from smaller centres. Fewer were aware of the presence of transgender students.

Despite widespread awareness of HBTP harassment and exclusion, schools varied considerably in the implementation of Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs, LGBTQ-inclusive events and activities, postering, etc., but some schools at all levels have done this.

⇒ **LGBTQ visibility.** Likelihood of having a GSA was strongly correlated with grade level; for instance, 1 in 4 participants from schools with Grade 8 as their highest level reported having a GSA versus over half of those from schools with Grade 12 as their highest level. Only 1 in 4 participants reported their school had not participated in any LGBTQ-themed events. Participants from Catholic schools were much less likely to report their school having a GSA or participating in such events. BC and Ontario educators reported the highest levels of involvement and visibility, with Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Territories reporting the lowest. Senior-years teachers were much more likely to report having various resources on LGBTQ topics.

Most participants in both the secular and Catholic school systems approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education and see it as relevant in a range of subject areas, but somewhat fewer would be comfortable discussing LGBTQ topics with students.

⇒ **Personal values and religion.** The vast majority of educators (85%) reported that they approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education. Educators from Catholic schools were only slightly less likely to approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education and slightly more likely to be opposed to it. Most see LGBTQ rights as human rights (96%) and reported that it was personally important for them to address human rights and social justice (98%), but somewhat fewer indicated it was important for them to address LGBTQ issues (87%) or issues of gender expression (85%) than to address multiculturalism (97%) or gender equity (96%). The vast majority of participants agreed that “students should be allowed to express their gender any way they like” (90%), and approved of same-sex marriage (88%). Almost all (99%) educators from a faith that supported same-sex marriage also personally supported same-sex marriage, as did, notably, 87% of those from religions with mixed views and 78% from religions that opposed same-sex marriage. Among

participants with no formal religion, 95% personally approved of same-sex marriage. A related finding was that 81% of educators from Catholic schools supported same-sex marriage (vs. 90% from secular schools). Fewer than 1 in 5 educators who attended services pertaining to their religion only a few times per year agreed that teachers should be able to opt out of LGBTQ-inclusive education, but over half of respondents who typically attended Christian services more than once a week agreed (33% for Catholic services, 71% for non-Catholic).

⇒ **School safety.** When asked what school safety required, almost three-quarters of educators selected “inclusion (e.g., through curriculum, school clubs and events, and policy)” rather than regulation of behaviour.

⇒ **LGBTQ content in the curriculum.** Educators were most likely to report that LGBTQ content was relevant to “health/family studies/human ecology” (86%), but this was closely followed by many other subjects including social studies (79%), English language arts (78%), and social justice/law (78%). Many participants also saw LGBTQ content as relevant to history (63%), religion (59%), the arts (57%), French language arts (53%), science (46%), and physical education

(46%). One in five saw it as relevant to mathematics (22%).

⇒ **Comfort level in discussing LGBTQ topics with students.** Almost all (99%) participants agreed that “it is important for students to have someone to talk to,” but only 73% indicated they would be comfortable discussing LGBTQ topics with students. Likelihood of being comfortable was strongly correlated to participant characteristics, with guidance counsellors, LGBTQ participants, FNMI participants and senior-years educators being more comfortable than their respective counterparts. Participants from Catholic schools were much less likely to be comfortable (57%) than those from secular schools (76%) even though they were almost as likely to approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education (83% vs. 85%).

We found that educators were less likely to practice LGBTQ-inclusive education than to approve of it or to see it as relevant.

⇒ **School-level practices.** Overall, 37% of educators reported having participated in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts at their school, with 80% of guidance counsellors having participated. Regional participation varied from a high of 45% in Ontario to a low of 15% in Alberta/Saskatchewan.

⇒ **Classroom practices.** Three-quarters of teachers (78%) reported that they had included LGBTQ content in some way. The most common forms of inclusion were challenging homophobia (53%) and using inclusive language and examples (49%). Two-thirds (68%) of early-years teachers reported including LGBTQ content in their curriculum (vs. 84% in senior years).

Most educators believed there were no formal restrictions on LGBTQ-related content in the classroom (even in Alberta, where there was a parental notification requirement active throughout the duration of the survey), which raises the question, “What is holding some educators back from integrating such content, or integrating it more thoroughly?” To explore this question we examined a number of possible internal and external factors.

⇒ **Job security.** LGBTQ educators were more likely than CH educators to report that discussing LGBTQ issues would jeopardize their job. Participants from the Catholic school system were much more likely than those from secular schools to feel their job would be jeopardized (55% Catholic vs. 34% secular in Alberta, and 53% vs. 20% in Ontario).

⇒ **Confidence in teaching efficacy.** Over three-quarters (76%) of educators agreed that they could respond effectively when anti-LGBTQ incidents took place

at their school. Educators from Roman Catholic schools were somewhat less likely to agree (64%) than those from secular schools (78%). The highest level of agreement was found among those educators from schools with homophobic or transphobic harassment policies who felt very well trained on the policy (94% and 96%, respectively).

⇒ **Inhibiting factors.** Educators’ own perceptions of what would prevent them from addressing LGBTQ issues included lack of training and/or resources (33%), student-based reasons such as believing their students were too young (31%), fear-based reasons external to the school such as parental opposition (23%), and fear-based reasons internal to the school such as opposition from school administration (14%). Only 2% reported that “homosexuality is contrary to my religious convictions” (5% for Catholic school educators vs. 1% for secular). Catholic school educators were much more likely than secular ones to indicate inhibiting effects included insufficient training and opposition from religious groups, parents, trustees, school division, and school administration. LGBTQ educators were much more likely than CH to cite job insecurities, and CH educators were much more likely to cite insufficient training and resources.

⇒ **Childhood experiences of being bullied.** Over two-thirds of participants reported that they themselves had been bullied or harassed as minors. LGBTQ participants were more likely than CH to report having been bullied (77% vs. 65%), cisgender men (83%) more likely than transgender respondents (74%) or cisgender women (63%), and FNMI (80%) more likely than White (69%) or racialized (54%). Almost three-quarters (74%) of participants who had been bullied replied that they had not received any support from school staff. Those who had received no support or been blamed were much more likely to report that the harassment still distressed them.

⇒ **Childhood experiences of bullying others.** Cisgender men who had bullied were more likely than cisgender women who had bullied to report having bullied another student for being LGBTQ or being perceived to be LGBTQ (21% vs. 5%). LGBTQ respondents who had bullied were more likely than their CH counterparts (14% vs. 8%) to report having bullied another student for being or being perceived to be LGBTQ, with 30% of transgender respondents who had bullied reporting having participated in this type of bullying. Consistent with

other research, respondents who had been victimized themselves as minors were more likely to have participated in bullying others (13% vs. 4%).

⇒ **Mental health of educators.** Despite relative invisibility and ongoing stigmatization of LGBTQ identities in many schools, LGBTQ educators (67%) were only somewhat less likely than CH educators (78%) to be at the “flourishing” end of the Mental Health Continuum. Participants who were still suffering the impact of childhood experiences of bullying were far less likely to be flourishing. Educators who worked in a school with a homophobic harassment policy or a GSA were more likely to be flourishing than those who did not.

⇒ **LGBTQ educators.** Two-thirds (67%) of participants were aware of a teacher being harassed by students because they were or were perceived to be LGB, and one-fourth (23%) were aware of a teacher being harassed because of their gender expression. One-fourth (26%) were aware of a teacher having been harassed by their colleagues because they were or were perceived to be LGB and 1 in 10 (10%) were aware of a teacher having been harassed for their gender expression. Most LGBTQ participants (73%) were not out to administration when they were hired,

but the vast majority were out at the time of the survey to at least one person at their school (gay men 93%, lesbians 94%, but bisexuals only 61%). They were far less likely to have ever mentioned their partners in conversation with students (59%) than CH participants (84%), especially if they were in Catholic schools (35%). However, of those who were out to their whole school community, almost half (47%) felt that their school community's response to them was very supportive, and almost half (48%) generally supportive.

⇒ **Personal connection with LGBTQ individuals.** Virtually all (99%) participants reported personally knowing someone who is LGBTQ, which may help to explain our findings of a very high level of support for LGBTQ-inclusive education. Cisgender men were much more likely to have had a student talk to them about being LGBTQ (46%) than cisgender women (31%) or transgender respondents (30%). Catholic school educators (28%) were only slightly less likely than secular school ones (36%) to have had had a student talk to them about being LGBTQ. Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were more likely to have had a student speak with them (38%) than those who were either neutral (27%) or opposed (11%), which suggests that educators'

attitudes are often apparent to LGBTQ students. Almost 1 in 6 early-years educators had had a student speak to them about being LGBTQ.

⇒ **Leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive education.** Overall, teachers were more likely to see themselves as showing leadership, and they least likely to see administration or the Ministry of Education as showing leadership. Guidance counsellors saw both teachers and themselves as showing leadership. Many reported that no one shows leadership (e.g., 42% Catholic school educators vs. 19% secular reported no one shows leadership on curriculum, 48% vs. 25% on programming).

⇒ **Experiences of complaints about practicing LGBTQ-inclusive education.** Only 1 in 5 teachers who had included LGBTQ content reported having received complaints. LGBTQ teachers were more likely (28%) than CH teachers (14%) to have received complaints, transgender (42%) much more likely than cisgender women (20%) or cisgender men (15%), and FNMI (37%) much more likely than racialized (25%) or White teachers (17%). Teachers from Catholic schools (22%) were only slightly more likely than those from secular schools (18%). Of those who received complaints, most (72%) reported that their

principal had supported them, with teachers from Catholic schools being even more likely than those from secular schools to report that their principal had supported them (88% vs. 70%). Almost all FNMI teachers reported that their principals had supported them (97%) and nearly three-quarters (74%) of White teachers, but less than one-third (31%) of racialized teachers.

⇒ **Anticipated support.** Expectation of support from their teacher organization was strongly correlated to personal and school characteristics. For example, LGBTQ (85%), racialized (86%), and secular school educators (82%) were more likely than CH (76%), White (77%), FNMI (66%), or Catholic school (56%) educators to expect support from their teacher organization if they were to include LGBTQ content. Teachers who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education (80%) were far more likely to expect support than those who were opposed (55%). Teachers were somewhat less likely to be confident that legislation, administration or colleagues would support them. They were more likely to be confident of support from colleagues in schools with HBTP harassment policies than in schools without such policies.

⇒ **Bachelor of Education preparation.** Almost two-thirds of participants who had completed their B.Ed. degrees in the previous five years reported that they had not been at all prepared for sexual and gender diversity education in their B.Ed. degrees. Participants reported that few courses, if any, incorporated LGBTQ content. They were most likely to encounter content on homophobia (62%, with 22% reporting this topic was addressed in more than one course) and material on issues that LGBTQ students face (55%, with only 17% reporting this topic was addressed in more than one course). Graduate courses were somewhat more likely to include LGBTQ content.

We found that participation in professional development on LGBTQ-inclusive education and educators' perception of the availability of school district resource personnel were highly dependent on personal and school characteristics.

⇒ **Professional development offered by school or school district.** One third (32%) of respondents had attended professional development offered by their school or school district that addressed LGBTQ education. Those identifying with a religion that approved of same-sex marriage were more likely to attend (44%) than those from a

religion with mixed views on same-sex marriage (25%) or those whose religion generally disapproved of same-sex marriage (18%); 43% of respondents with no formal religion had attended. Respondents from schools with homophobic/transphobic harassment policy were far more likely to have attended (45%/47%) than those without homophobic/transphobic harassment policy (14%/23%). Catholic school educators were much less likely to have attended (20%) than secular school educators (35%). Only 6% of educators from French language schools reported having attended, compared to 35% from English language schools and 34% from mixed French and English language schools.

⇒ **School district resource personnel.** Two-thirds (67%) of respondents from schools with homophobic harassment policy and almost three-quarters (74%) of those from schools with transphobic harassment policy reported having a resource person specializing in LGBTQ issues, versus 32% of those from schools without homophobic harassment policy and 34% without transphobic harassment policy. Educators from Catholic schools were far less likely to have a resource person available through their school district (15%) than those working in secular schools (59%).

⇒ **Teacher organization workshops and resources.** The majority (61%) of participants reported that their local or provincial/territorial teacher organization held professional development workshops or training that addressed LGBTQ education. Over half of these (32%) had attended this training, while 16% were invited but unable to attend and 13% were invited but chose not to attend. LGBTQ educators were far more likely to have attended (46% vs. 25% CH). Educators whose current religion approved of same-sex marriage were far more likely to have attended (53%) than those whose religion held mixed views (15%). In contrast, one-third (34%) of those whose religion was generally opposed reported having attended. Catholic school educators were less likely than secular school educators to report that their teacher organization offered professional development workshops or training (45% vs. 64%), though they were only slightly less likely to attend (29% vs. 32% attended). They were also less likely to report the availability of a teacher organization resource person specializing in LGBTQ issues, with only 32% reporting they knew of such a person, compared to 69% of educators from secular schools. Regionally, educators in British Columbia were most likely to

report their teacher organization had committees or cohorts on LGBTQ issues (84%), followed by Ontario (73%), Saskatchewan (66%), Nova Scotia (65%), Manitoba (55%), New Brunswick (53%), Newfoundland & Labrador (44%), and Alberta (42%).

⇒ ***Perspective on value of school system interventions for LGBTQ students.***

Respondents indicated that broad-based institutional support for LGBTQ inclusion would be the most helpful in creating safer schools through such initiatives as having a principal or superintendent who openly supported teachers who take action on LGBTQ issues (81% "very helpful"), respectful inclusion in schools (79% very helpful), and respectful inclusion of LGBTQ content in the curriculum (78%). Support was much lower for anti-transphobia curriculum (54% very helpful), which suggests that there is a need for more awareness of the impact of transphobia on students. Establishing safe spaces in schools (such as by having an ally on staff that students can talk to) was most likely to be seen as very helpful (84%). Respondents were most likely to see the regulation of behaviour and security measures as harmful to LGBTQ students, but showed strong support for the legal enforcement

of punishment for criminal assaults (64% very helpful and 25% somewhat helpful). Educators who were supportive of LGBTQ-inclusive education were consistently much more likely to view various efforts as very helpful than those who were neutral or opposed. Catholic school and secular school educators were similarly strong in support of initiatives such as LGBTQ-inclusive equity policies, open support from principals and superintendents, GSAs, and LGBTQ inclusion in the school community and curriculum.

# [ DETAILED RESULTS ]

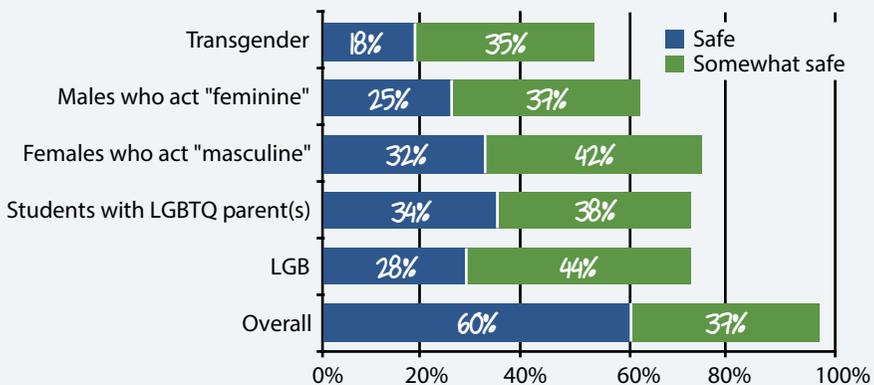
## PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE

### PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL SAFETY

**A**lmost all educators (97%) consider their school to be safe (60%) or somewhat safe (37%); however, when they were asked questions that focus on the safety of LGBTQ students, in particular, the numbers dropped substantially.

As shown in Figure 2, 72% of respondents believed their school to be safe (28%) or somewhat safe (44%) for LGB students, with a similar breakdown for students with LGBTQ parent(s) (34% safe and 38% somewhat safe). With respect to issues of safety regarding gender identity and expression, the numbers drop further. For example, 53% of educators reported their school was safe for transgender students, but only 18% were confident of this safety while the other 35% agreed that transgender students were “somewhat” safe. Given such a low perception of school safety for transgender students, it is disappointing that only 22% of educators reported that there were single-user or all-persons’ washrooms available for students (but only 8% reported it was specifically designated for students’ use, while 11% indicated it was designated for staff, but students could receive permission, and 3% gave other responses such as availability of a disabled-accessible washroom). The student Climate Survey found that washrooms and change

FIGURE 2: EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL SAFETY



rooms (second only to hallways) were the school site most commonly identified as unsafe for LGBTQ students. Transgender-friendly alternatives to conventional sex-segregated communal washrooms have been identified as a key component of trans-inclusive school initiatives.

The disparity between high perceptions of overall student safety and lower perception of safety specific to LGBTQ students suggests that unless educators are asked questions directly about homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBTP) harassment, many are not thinking about the situation of LGBTQ students in their assessment of school safety.

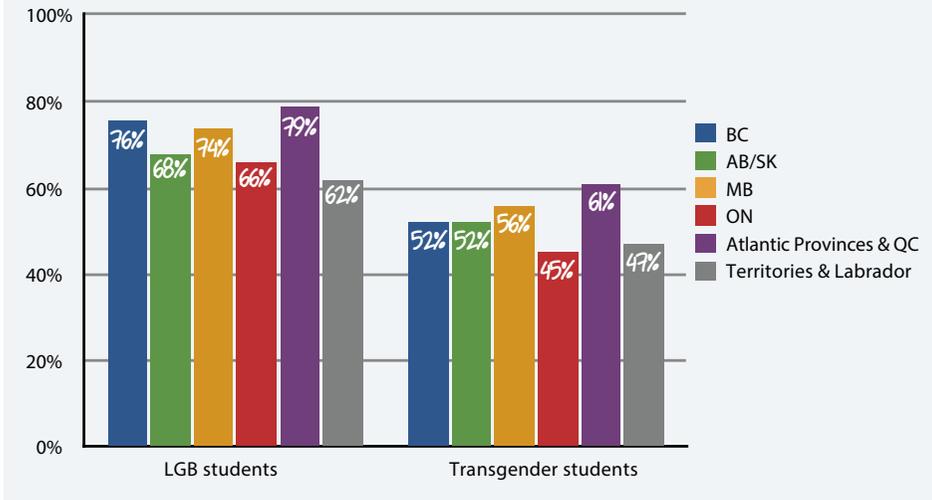
These findings were consistent with the Climate Survey, which found that who you are (e.g., CH vs. LGB vs. transgender) makes a difference to how safe school seems. For example, in the Climate Survey when all identity-related sources of harassment were taken into account, 64% of LGBTQ respondents reported feeling unsafe compared to 15% of CH participants. More specifically, 53% of LGBTQ students reported feeling unsafe at school due to their sexual orientation or their perceived sexual orientation, whereas only 3% of CH participants reported feeling unsafe on those grounds. Though the gap is not as drastic, the trend continues for gender identity and gender expression with 29%

of LGBTQ participants feeling unsafe due to their gender identity or gender expression compared to 4% of CH respondents.

Sexual orientation and gender identity were also factors affecting educators' perceptions of school safety for LGB and transgender students. As reported in the Climate Survey, LGBTQ participants were more likely to notice LGBTQ-related harassment. In the Every Teacher Project, while 75% of CH educators believed their school was safe for LGB students, only 66% of LGBTQ educators agreed with this statement. The gap was even more pronounced when educators were asked about the safety of transgender students, with only 38% of LGBTQ educators agreeing that transgender students would feel safe at their schools, versus 57% of CH educators.

As shown in Figure 3, there was variation across the country in terms of perceptions of safety for LGBTQ students. Educators from the Territories and Labrador were the least likely to agree that their school was safe for LGB students (62%) or for transgender students (47%), followed by Ontario (66% for LGB and 45% for transgender), while participants in the Atlantic provinces and Québec were the most likely to consider their school safe for LGB (79%) and transgender (61%) students.

**FIGURE 3: SCHOOL SAFETY FOR LGB AND TRANSGENDER STUDENTS (BY REGION)**



Community context also affected educators' perceptions of LGB and transgender students' safety. For instance, educators from schools located in remote small towns, rural areas, First Nations reserves, or Armed Forces Bases (remote/rural/reserve/AFB) were the least likely to think their school was safe for LGB (56%) or transgender (39%) students. These numbers were somewhat higher for city and suburban area schools and for those in small cities and non-remote towns. Educators from cities or suburban areas were more likely to report schools safe for LGB students (73%) and transgender students (56%) than were those from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools. Educators from small cities and non-remote

towns were more likely to report their schools were safe for LGB students (74%) than for transgender students (51%).

Perceptions of safety for sexual minority students also varied with the racialized identity of the educator. While almost three-quarters (73%) of White educators thought their school safe for LGB students (and only 15% thought it unsafe), only 62% (27% unsafe) of FNMI and 61% (29% unsafe) of other racialized educators agreed. However, racialized educators were as likely as White educators (52% vs. 53%) to agree that transgender students would feel safe in their schools, while only a third (32%) of FNMI respondents agreed.

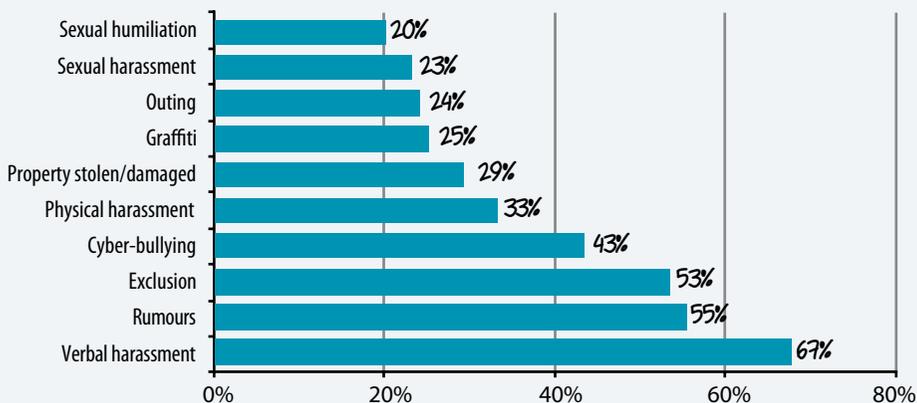
There was some variation in perception of safety among participants in different job categories. The majority of administrators believed their school was safe for LGB students (81%) and transgender students (63%), while 78% of guidance counsellors felt their school was safe for sexual minority students and 57% maintained it was safe for transgender students, both of which were higher than teachers' perceptions (71% for LGB students and 52% for transgender students). This may indicate that teachers are more attuned to the situation LGBTQ students face every day, as teachers are more involved in the day-to-day lives of students than either administrators or counsellors, who are more likely to become involved mainly in cases of physical or sexual assault.

## **INCIDENTS OF HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC, AND TRANSPHOBIC (HBTP) HARASSMENT**

Figure 4 provides a percentage breakdown of educators who were aware of various incidents of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic (HBTP) bullying and harassment in their schools in the past 12 months. Over two-thirds (67%) of respondents were aware of incidents of verbal harassment of LGBTQ students (or students who were perceived to be LGBTQ). Over half (55%) were aware of LGBTQ students being the target of rumours, while 53% knew of LGBTQ students being excluded based on their actual or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation. Two out of five participants (43%) reported being aware of students being the victims of HBTP cyber-bullying, while a third (33%) knew of LGBTQ students (or those perceived to be LGBTQ) who were physically harassed. Nearly one-quarter (23%) knew of such students being sexually harassed, and one in five (20%) reported being aware of incidents of sexual humiliation because of students' LGBTQ, or perceived, identity.

### **Awareness of students being subject to HBTP verbal harassment**

**FIGURE 4: AWARENESS OF HBTP INCIDENTS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (% YES)**

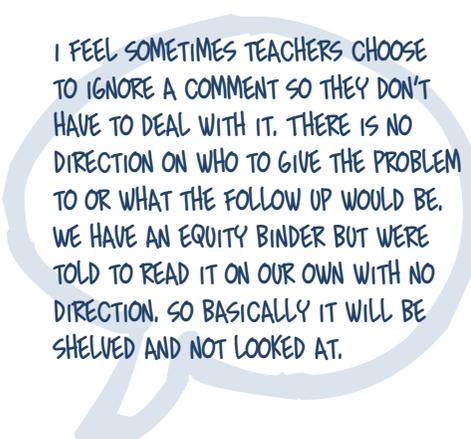


In terms of bivariate correlations, we found that FNMI educators were more likely to be aware of incidents of HBTP verbal harassment (75%) than were other racialized survey participants (68%) or White respondents (67%). We also found differences among participants grouped by values and their personal religious affiliation (as distinct from the religious affiliation of their school). For example, educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were significantly more likely to be aware of students being verbally harassed (72%) than respondents who were neutral (48%) or those who opposed it (31%). Moreover, participants affiliated with a religion that approved of same-sex marriage

were more likely to be aware of incidents of verbal harassment (87%), those who followed no formal religion (68%), those whose religion held mixed views (66%), and those whose religion was officially opposed to same-sex marriage (61%).

There was no significant difference in the likelihood of awareness of HBTP harassment between educators from schools that currently had a policy that provided guidance to school staff on how to address incidents of harassment or bullying based on sexual orientation (herein referred to as a homophobic harassment policy) and those educators from schools without a policy (69%

and 70%, respectively). Respondents who worked in schools with such a policy were subsequently asked whether they felt they had received sufficient training on this policy; those educators who responded that they had not received sufficient training or had not been trained at all were only slightly more likely to report being aware of verbal harassment (80%) than participants who had received some training but would like more (78%). However, this number was reduced substantially for educators whose school had homophobic harassment policy *and* who felt that they were very well or adequately prepared to enact policy (60%). This lower number suggests that while homophobic harassment policy on its own is not enough to lower the incidence of HBTP verbal harassment, a policy effectively implemented by incorporating staff training can do this.



I FEEL SOMETIMES TEACHERS CHOOSE TO IGNORE A COMMENT SO THEY DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT. THERE IS NO DIRECTION ON WHO TO GIVE THE PROBLEM TO OR WHAT THE FOLLOW UP WOULD BE. WE HAVE AN EQUITY BINDER BUT WERE TOLD TO READ IT ON OUR OWN WITH NO DIRECTION. SO BASICALLY IT WILL BE SHELVED AND NOT LOOKED AT.

We found similar results for schools with a policy that provided guidance to staff on how to address incidents of harassment or bullying based on gender identity or gender expression (herein referred to as a transphobic harassment policy). Of those educators whose school had such a policy, 68% were aware of incidents of HBTP verbal harassment, compared to 74% of educators who worked at schools without such policies. Among those educators who worked at schools with a transphobic harassment policy but reported not being sufficiently trained or not being trained at all, 84% were aware of HBTP verbal harassment, compared with 76% of those who reported having been trained but wanting further training and 60% of those who reported being very well or adequately trained. Put another way, we found that educators' awareness of HBTP verbal harassment was significantly higher where policies exist but training was insufficient (84% vs. 74% of educators who worked at schools without policies). This is similar to the finding noted in the previous paragraph for homophobic harassment: in other words, in the case of both homophobic harassment and transphobic harassment policies, having policy *and* training staff on how to implement policy is reflected in a lower incidence of HBTP harassment.

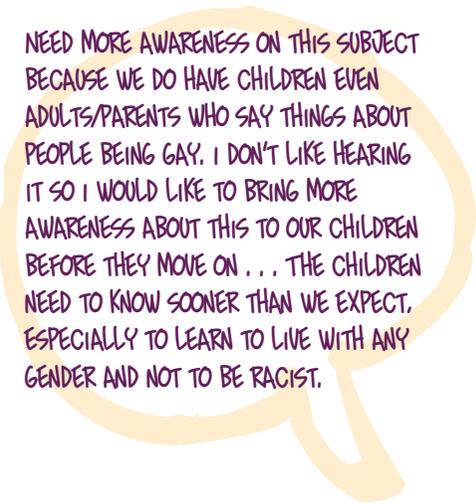
The socioeconomic status (SES) of respondents' school populations also factored into educators' awareness of HBTP verbal

harassment among students, but such harassment was perceived by high numbers of participants in schools across the SES spectrum. Generally, the higher percentage of students from low-income households in a given school, the greater the incidence of verbal harassment and bullying reported by participants. For schools with less than 10% population from low-income families, 55% of educators were aware of verbal harassment; 67% reported verbal harassment in schools with 10-24% low-income population; 69% reported verbal harassment in schools with 25-49% low-income student population; 67% reported verbal harassment in schools with 50-74% low-income student population; and 72% of educators reported verbal harassment in schools with over 75% of students from low-income households.

While we might expect to find a difference in educators' awareness based on the religious affiliation of the school in which they worked, we found that there was virtually no difference in educators' awareness of verbal harassment between Catholic schools (66%) and secular schools (67%).

Among grade levels, there was only a slight increase in educators' awareness of verbal harassment between early, middle and senior years. Almost two-thirds (65%) of educators working in middle years reported being aware of verbal harassment, with educators working in early years reporting slightly lower awareness (62%) and educators in senior years

reporting slightly higher (71%). Since nearly two-thirds of early-years educators reported their awareness of verbal harassment, the vital need for early interventions suited for younger years is apparent. Although most early-years students have not yet become aware of their own sexual orientations, they are still using HBTP language and policing gender conformity with comments about boys acting "too much like a girl" and vice versa.



NEED MORE AWARENESS ON THIS SUBJECT BECAUSE WE DO HAVE CHILDREN EVEN ADULTS/PARENTS WHO SAY THINGS ABOUT PEOPLE BEING GAY. I DON'T LIKE HEARING IT SO I WOULD LIKE TO BRING MORE AWARENESS ABOUT THIS TO OUR CHILDREN BEFORE THEY MOVE ON . . . THE CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW SOONER THAN WE EXPECT, ESPECIALLY TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH ANY GENDER AND NOT TO BE RACIST.

LGBTQ identity is often assumed to be irrelevant at younger grades. However, there are several reasons for considering inclusive practices relevant: many early-years students have LGBTQ parents, siblings and other loved ones; many early-years transgender students are already keenly aware that their gender identity differs from the gender

associated with their birth-assigned sex; many pre-adolescent students who will grow up to be LGB adults are already experiencing same-sex attractions and are internalizing homonegative messages; and early-years students in general are already learning to practice HBTP harassment as a routine schoolyard pastime. For example, there was little difference between early-years and senior-years school respondents who reported being aware of physical harassment targeting boys who act “too much like a girl” (53% vs. 54%), girls who act “too much like a boy” (29% vs. 34%), or gender non-conformity in clothing (24% vs. 26%). The gap is even smaller for negative gender-related comments: 70% of early-years educators reported hearing negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl” (vs. 69% of senior-years educators), followed by 54% for hearing negative remarks about girls acting “too much like a boy” (vs. 56%). While only 10% of early-years educators reported being aware of students being verbally or physically harassed because they were LGB, compared to 43% of participants who worked in senior-years schools, 28% (vs. 55% for senior-years educators) reported hearing homonegative remarks, such as “that’s so gay,” at least weekly from students. Only 24% reported never hearing such comments (vs. 8% for senior-years educators).

### **Awareness of students being subject to HBTP physical harassment**

While there was no difference between cisgender men and cisgender women regarding awareness of HBTP verbal harassment (68% of both reported being aware of incidents of verbal harassment at some point), transgender participants were much less likely to be aware of HBTP verbal harassment (35%). When it came to physical harassment, cisgender men were much more likely to be aware of incidents of HBTP physical violence (43%) than were cisgender women (30%), with transgender respondents again being much less likely to report being aware (13%). (Cisgender men were also much more likely (32%) to be aware of students being physically victimized for being perceived as LGB than were cisgender women (21%) and transgender participants (11%).)

Educators’ awareness of students being physically harassed varied depending on the educator’s personal identity and beliefs, the presence of policy in school, and the community context and composition of the school.

Racialized educators were more likely to report being aware of HBTP physical harassment (40%) than those identifying as White (33%) or FNMI (29%). Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were also more likely to be aware of HBTP physical harassment (36%); those who were neutral

or who opposed LGBTQ-inclusive education practices reported lower levels of awareness (24% and 14% respectively).

Further, personal religious adherence had some impact on educators' awareness of physical harassment. Over one-third (35%) of educators with no formal religious affiliation reported they were aware of physical harassment. Of those who indicated they adhered to specific religions, there were differing levels of awareness of physical harassment based on that religion's view of same-sex partnerships. For instance, an educator adhering to a religion that officially approves of same-sex marriage was more likely to be aware of physical harassment (46%) than an educator from a religion that has mixed views (33%) or expresses outright opposition (29%). The lowest level of awareness came from educators who indicated they were religious but did not specify a religion (26%). These findings can perhaps be explained by the impact of religious views both on attention to the presence of this kind of abuse and on willingness to name it as homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic.

Interestingly, however, whether a school was religious or secular had virtually no impact on an educator's awareness of HBTP physical harassment, with 32% of educators from Catholic schools reporting being aware of physical harassment, compared to 34% of educators from secular schools.



HURTS MY HEART TO KNOW THAT THEY CAN'T BE THEMSELVES FOR FEAR OF RETRIBUTION.

### Awareness of physical harassment based on sexual orientation

Existing homophobic harassment policies in schools also affected educators' awareness of physical harassment; and as with verbal harassment, this is most clearly reflected in the level of training that educators received on these policies. For instance, the presence of a homophobic harassment policy did not yield significantly different results in the educator's awareness of such instances (in schools with policy 35% reported being aware of physical harassment; in schools without policy 37%). In those schools where policy existed, educators who indicated they received insufficient or no training on the policy (38%) or that they would have liked more training (39%) reported slightly higher levels of awareness of physical harassment based on sexual orientation. Educators who indicated they were very well or adequately trained on policies were least likely to report physical harassment (31%). Since it is unlikely that policy training on physical harassment would lead to less awareness of the presence of physical harassment, this finding suggests that policy training leads to fewer incidents of such harassment.

INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS ARE IMPROVING WITH REGARDS TO ADDRESSING HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC HARASSMENT ISSUES. WE HAVE AN ACTIVE GSA IN THE SCHOOL AND THEY WORK ON EDUCATING BOTH STAFF AND STUDENTS THROUGH SCHOOL WIDE ACTIVITIES. I BELIEVE THAT WE NEED TO DO MORE INTENSIVE STAFF TRAINING ABOUT LGBTQ ISSUES SO THAT MORE STAFF FEEL COMFORTABLE ENOUGH TO ADDRESS HOMO/TRANSPHOBIC HARASSMENT IN THEIR CLASSROOMS AND THE COMMON AREAS OF THE SCHOOL.

### **Awareness of physical harassment based on gender identity and expression**

The situation is similar for transphobic harassment policies. There was no significant difference associated with the presence of policy for educators' awareness of physical harassment based on gender identity or expression (in schools with policy 35% of educators reported physical harassment; in schools without policy 37%). Again, the difference is most noticeable in the sufficiency of the training. Educators who received adequate training but said they would have liked to receive more reported the highest levels of awareness of physical harassment (44%), followed by educators who reported receiving insufficient or no training (38%). The

lowest levels of physical harassment on the grounds of gender identity and expression were reported by educators who reported that they were very well or adequately trained on the school's policy (31%). Again, as with both physical harassment based on sexual orientation and verbal harassment based on sexual orientation and on gender identity, this lower number suggests that effective policy implementation coupled with thorough staff training results in a lower incidence of physical harassment based on gender identity and expression.

The location and demographics of the school also contributed to educator awareness of physical harassment. Where the school is located can have as much of an impact on an educator's awareness of physical harassment as the demographics of the school. Educators from schools located in small cities and non-remote towns were more likely to report being aware of physical harassment than educators from schools in cities or suburban areas (39% vs. 31%) or from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (27%).

Demographics of the student population, such as income bracket, "racial" make up, and grade level all affected educator awareness of physical harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The lower the income level of the student population's households, the higher was the educator awareness of physical harassment. With less than 10% of students from low-income

households, 21% of educators reported being aware of physical harassment; with 10-24% of students from low-income households, 35% of educators were aware of physical harassment; with 25-49% students from low-income households, 36% of educators reported physical harassment; and with 50% and over of students from low-income households, 40% of educators reported physical harassment on the grounds of sexual and gender identity.

As well, awareness of physical harassment increased between early-years, middle-years and senior-years levels. Over one-quarter (27%) of educators working in early years reported being aware of physical harassment, almost one-third (31%) of educators working in middle years reported physical harassment, and 38% of educators in senior years. Again, with over a quarter of early-years educators reporting physical harassment based on sexual identity, gender identity and gender expression, it is evident that interventions suited to early-years students are needed.

Earlier we discussed the impact of educators' own sexual and gender identity on their perceptions of school safety for LGBTQ students, with LGBTQ educators being much more likely to see their schools as unsafe for LGBTQ students. We also found that their sexual and gender identity affected educators' attention to related harassment in their schools. It is not surprising, given LGBTQ educators' personal connection to the issue,

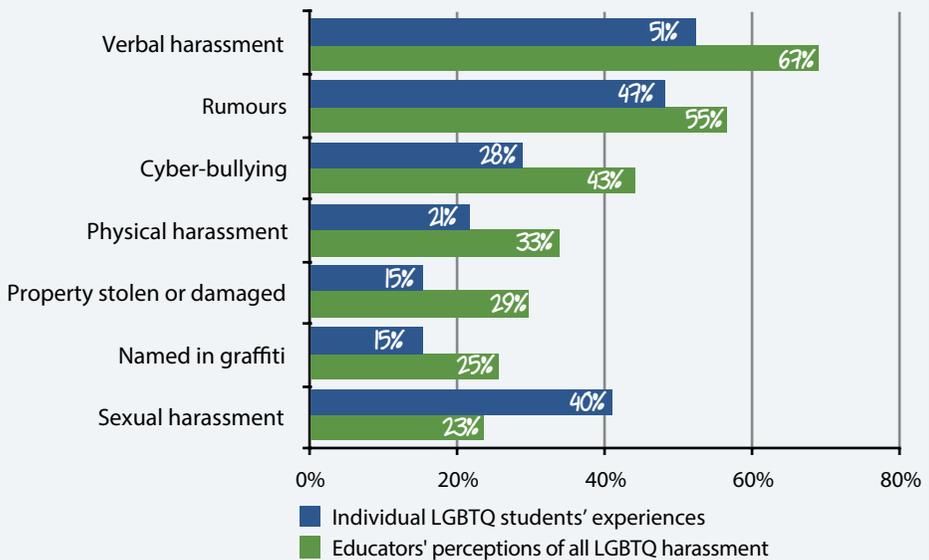
and the increased likelihood of students confiding in them about HBTP harassment, that LGBTQ educators were much more likely to be aware of students being homophobically and transphobically harassed than their CH counterparts. For instance, 80% of LGBTQ educators reported being aware of incidents of verbal harassment of LGBTQ students or those perceived to be LGBTQ, compared to 64% of CH participants. The gap between LGBTQ educators' awareness and that of CH educators remained when asked about incidents of physical violence (50% vs. 29%). The trend continues for other incidents of harassment and bullying. Thus, LGBTQ educators were much more likely than CH educators to report being aware of incidents where students have been excluded (70% vs. 49%), the target of rumours (68% vs. 52%), the target of graffiti (41% vs. 21%), "outed" at school (40% vs. 20%), and sexually harassed (34% vs. 20%) for being or being perceived to be LGBTQ.

These numbers are not directly comparable to the student Climate Survey findings (Taylor and Peter, 2011), where we asked about LGBTQ students' individual experiences of harassment, not their perceptions of all LGBTQ students' experiences. It is notable, however, that some teachers were aware of all the forms of HBTP harassment that were reported by students in the Climate Survey. Understandably, their likelihood of awareness of any LGBTQ

student having been harassed in the various ways tends to be somewhat higher than the likelihood of any one LGBTQ student reporting having been harassed in those ways. This does not hold for sexual harassment, however, where the pattern is reversed: 40% of LGBTQ students reported having been sexually harassed, but only 23%

of educators had been aware of any LGBTQ student having been sexually harassed (see Figure 5). This may suggest that LGBTQ students and their CH peers are not confiding in teachers, counsellors or school officials about incidents of sexual harassment of LGBTQ students.

**FIGURE 5: EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS VERSUS LGBTQ STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF HARASSMENT**



## **HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS PERCEIVED TO BE LGBTQ AND OF HETEROSEXUAL STUDENTS**

Incidents of HBTP bullying are not restricted to “out” LGBTQ students, as 50% of educators reported that they were aware of students being verbally harassed for being perceived as LGB, and 23% of their being physically harassed. Further, 35% reported that they were aware of heterosexual students who had experienced homophobic harassment. (Presumably, these heterosexual students include LGBTQ students who were not yet out and were perceived as heterosexual.)

Ontario educators reported the highest levels of awareness, with 56% of educators reporting awareness of students being verbally harassed for being perceived to be LGBTQ and 42% of educators aware of heterosexual students who had been homophobicly harassed. Next highest, 47% of BC educators reported being aware of students being verbally harassed for being perceived as LGBTQ and 34% reporting they were aware of heterosexual students being homophobicly harassed. The Atlantic provinces and Québec reported overall that 45% of educators were aware of students being verbally harassed for being perceived as LGBTQ, with 31% reporting awareness of heterosexual students being homophobicly harassed. In Manitoba, 40% of educators reported being aware of students being

verbally harassed for being perceived as LGBTQ and 29% reported being aware of heterosexual students being homophobicly harassed. Alberta/Saskatchewan reported 34% of educators were aware of students being verbally harassed for being perceived as LGBTQ, with 24% reporting awareness of heterosexual students being homophobicly harassed. In the Territories (Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon) and Labrador, we found that 41% of educators reported being aware of verbal harassment of students due to being perceived to be LGBTQ and that 25% of educators were aware of heterosexual students who had been homophobicly harassed. As we noted in the student Climate Survey report, in any given school there may actually be more heterosexual than LGBTQ students being homophobicly, biphobically, and transphobically harassed, given that they outnumber LGBTQ students by roughly 10 to 1. While these numbers do not tell us about the severity of the harassment, nor how widespread it is, nor about its impact, they do suggest that school officials and educators ought to be addressing it in their professional development and practices.

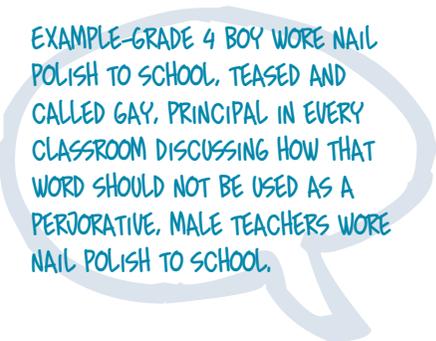
Looking at grade levels, we found an overall increase from younger years to later years. For educators in early years (Pre-K to Grade 4), we found lower but still substantial levels of awareness, with 37% of educators reporting awareness of students being verbally harassed in some way because

they were perceived as LGBTQ and 29% reporting awareness of heterosexual students being homophobically harassed. Educators working in middle years (Grades 5 to 8) reported higher levels of awareness of students being harassed due to their perceived sexual identity (47%) and their awareness of heterosexual students who had been homophobically harassed (33%). In senior years (Grades 9 to 12), 57% of educators reported being aware of students being verbally harassed for being perceived as LGBTQ and 38% reported being aware of heterosexual students who had been homophobically harassed.

Educators' personal identities and roles within the school also influenced their awareness of these types of harassment in schools. For instance, teachers who identified as LGBTQ were much more likely to be aware of students who were verbally harassed for being perceived as LGBTQ than CH teachers (68% LGBTQ compared to 45% CH). Similarly, LGBTQ teachers' awareness of heterosexual students being homophobically harassed was higher (45%) than CH teachers (33%). We also found differences along lines of racial identity, with 38% of FNMI educators and 36% of White educators reporting awareness of heterosexual students being homophobically harassed, as compared with 26% of educators of racialized identities. Guidance counsellors reported the highest

awareness of heterosexual students being homophobically harassed (52%), followed by teachers (34%) and administrators and other non-teacher school staff (33%).

Educators' personal beliefs about LGBTQ-inclusive education also affected their level of awareness of HBTP harassment. Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were far more likely to be aware of both students being verbally harassed for being perceived to be LGBTQ (56%, compared with 17% of educators neutral on LGBTQ-inclusive education and 21% of those opposed) and heterosexual students being homophobically verbally harassed (40%, compared with 12% of those neutral about LGBTQ-inclusive education and 7% of those opposed). The reasons for the much lower awareness reported by educators who did not approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education may include an unwillingness to recognize a problem that they do not want to address.



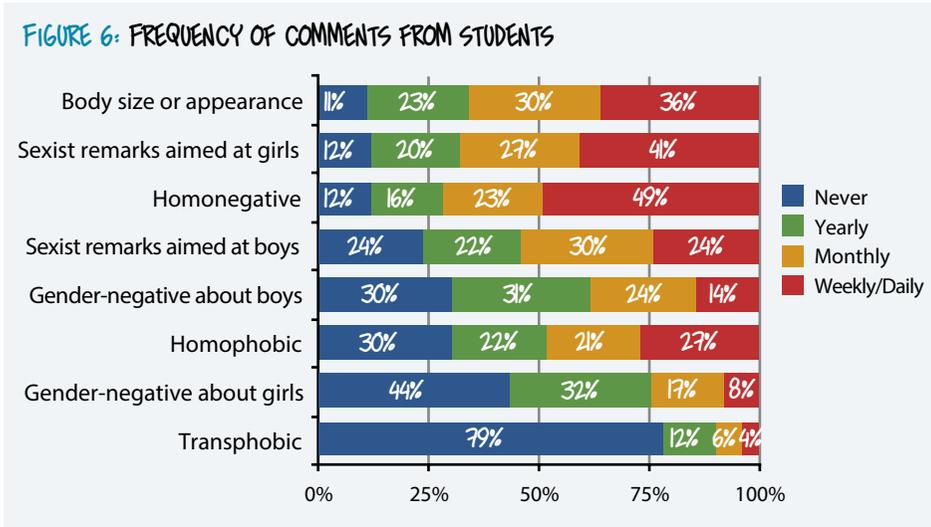
EXAMPLE-GRADE 4 BOY WORE NAIL POLISH TO SCHOOL, TEASED AND CALLED GAY. PRINCIPAL IN EVERY CLASSROOM DISCUSSING HOW THAT WORD SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A PERJORATIVE. MALE TEACHERS WORE NAIL POLISH TO SCHOOL.

Finally, half (50%) of our participants were also aware of boy students being verbally harassed for acting “too much like a girl,” and 30% of girl students being harassed for acting “too much like a boy.” Further, 22% of educators reported being aware of boy students being physically harassed for acting “too much like a girl,” while 13% were aware of girl students being physically bullied for acting “too much like a boy.”

These numbers point to the student culture of gender regulation described by many researchers (e.g., Pascoe, 2007; Short, 2013), where heterosexual students routinely make use of HBTP accusations and insults to enforce a system of rigid gender conformity on each other, leading students to conform to gender expectations to avoid being stigmatized as gay.

### HOMONEGATIVE AND HOMOPHOBIC LANGUAGE

Nearly half (49%) of educators reported hearing homonegative comments such as “that’s so gay” at least weekly in their school (see Figure 6). Only 12% of participants reported never hearing such comments.



Although LGBTQ students comprise a minority section of any school population, educators heard homonegative remarks even more frequently than they heard sexist remarks or remarks about body size or appearance.

As with other indicators of awareness of LGBTQ safety and harassment, LGBTQ educators were more likely than their CH counterparts to report hearing homonegative comments (56% vs. 47%) at least weekly at their school. When it came to reporting hearing homonegative comments at least weekly in their school, there was virtually no difference between cisgender men (50%), cisgender women (49%), and transgender participants (48%). Respondents from racialized groups (74%) were even more likely to report hearing comments like “that’s so gay.” The rate was significantly lower for both White participants (48%) and FNMI educators (47%). Educators on a term, casual, or occasional contract as well as substitute teachers were somewhat more likely to report hearing homonegative comments (58%) than respondents who were on a permanent contract (48%), perhaps because students would be less likely to self-monitor in their presence.

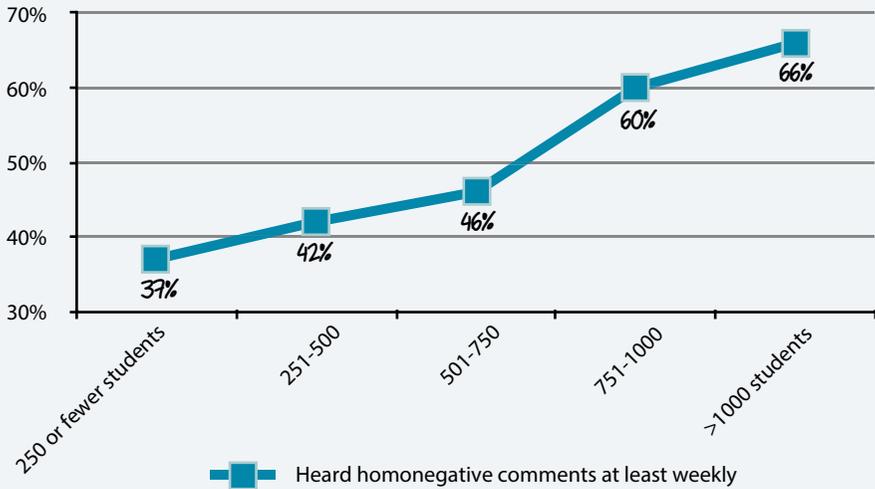
Educators in remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools were the most likely to hear homonegative comments at least weekly (57%), followed by educators from cities

or suburban areas (52%), while those from small cities and non-remote towns were the least likely (43%). Only a quarter (26%) of educators from French language only schools reported hearing comments like “that’s so gay” or “t’es gai” at least weekly at their school, compared to 54% from English language schools and 51% from dual track French and English language schools. Results also show that reports of homonegative language become more prevalent as school size increases. As illustrated in Figure 7, slightly more than a third (37%) of educators from schools with under 250 students indicated hearing comments like “that’s so gay” at least weekly at school, compared to 66% of educators from schools with over 1000 students. Finally, educators who worked with students in senior years reported the highest rate of hearing homonegative language at least weekly (61%), followed by respondents who worked with students from middle years (46%), and those who worked with children from early years (35%).

There was only a small difference between educators affiliated with Catholic schools (54%) and secular schools (49%) in hearing homonegative comments at least weekly.

Over a quarter (27%) of participants reported hearing homophobic comments such as “faggot” or “dyke” at least weekly in their school. As with homonegative comments, LGBTQ educators were more

**FIGURE 7: PREVALENCE OF HOMONEGATIVE COMMENTS (BY SCHOOL SIZE)**



likely to report hearing homophobic comments (34%) than were CH respondents (25%). Although the differences among educators of different racial/ethnic identities in the frequency of hearing homophobic comments was not as wide as it was for hearing language such as “that’s so gay,” racialized participants were still more likely to report hearing comments like “faggot” or “dyke” at least weekly (38%) than White educators (27%) or FNMI participants (32%). This may suggest that experiences of racialization make educators more alert to certain other forms of discriminatory language, or that racialized educators

are more likely to be teaching in schools where more homophobic language is used. (However, neither explanation would account for racialized teachers reporting more hostile language than FNMI educators. Questions such as these will be explored in the qualitative data.)

Educators on term, occasional, casual or substitute contracts were more likely (37%) than educators on permanent contracts (26%) to hear students making homophobic comments at least weekly (again, possibly because students would have less compunction about making such comments in their presence).

School size also correlated with participants' awareness of homophobic comments made by students at least weekly: the larger the size of a school, the greater the likelihood that educators heard homophobic comments at least weekly. For instance, 19% of educators reported hearing homophobic comments at least weekly in schools with 250 students or fewer; 21% of educators reported homophobic language at least weekly in schools with 251 to 500 students; one-quarter (25%) for schools with 501 to 750 students; and 38% for schools with 751 to 1000 students and for schools with over 1000 students.

There was only a slight difference between the frequency of homophobic language heard at least weekly in Catholic schools (33%) as compared with secular schools (27% at least weekly).

Homophobic language was reported at all grade levels, with higher levels being reported in senior years (a departure from the findings of bullying research that bullying behaviours tend to peak in middle years and then start to decline). In early years, 17% of educators reported hearing homophobic comments at least weekly in school. One-quarter (25%) of educators working with middle years reported hearing homophobic language at least weekly. Educators in senior years reported the highest level of hearing homophobic comments at least weekly (37%). It is worth noting that even in younger years, homophobic language is still quite

prevalent. Only 42% of early-years educators reported never hearing homophobic language.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given that abusive language is likely to be used out of earshot of educators, the numbers overall were lower than those found in the Climate Survey, where 92% of students reported hearing "that's so gay" at least weekly, and 79% heard comments such as "faggot" or "dyke." This disparity points to the need to remember that adult assessments of school climate for LGBTQ students may be unduly optimistic if based only on their own observations.

## **TRANSPHOBIC AND TRANSNEGATIVE LANGUAGE**

This limitation notwithstanding, transphobic language, such as calling another student "tranny" or "she-male," appears to be used less frequently in school. Only 4% of educators reported hearing such words at least weekly, and 79% had never heard these terms. However, negative remarks based on gender expression were more widespread. In particular, 14% of educators reported hearing negative remarks about a boy acting "too much like a girl" at least weekly at school, and 8% heard remarks about a girl acting "too much like a boy" at least once a week. Again, LGBTQ respondents were more likely to report hearing comments about a boy acting "too much like a girl" (22%) than CH

educators (13%). They also reported hearing negative comments about girls acting “too much like a boy” more frequently than their CH colleagues (12% vs. 6%).

Transgender respondents were much more likely to report hearing negative comments about gender expression: 35% reported they were aware of weekly comments about boys acting “too much like a girl” (vs. 14% for cisgender women and 13% for cisgender men), and 36% about girls acting “too much like a boy” (vs. 7% for cisgender women and 7% for cisgender men). This could be attributable to students making more such remarks in the presence of transgender educators, or to transgender educators noticing remarks that cisgender educators do not.

Participants from racialized groups were also more likely than White or FNMI educators to hear negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl,” though by a smaller margin (22%, vs. 14% for White and 15% for FNMI). There were no significant differences among identity groups in regards to hearing negative remarks about girls acting “too much like a boy” (7% for White vs. 9% for FNMI vs. 8% for racialized participants).

Educators on term, occasional, casual or substitute contracts were more likely to report hearing students make negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl” on a daily or weekly basis (23%) than

educators on permanent contract (13%). While the overall numbers were lower, employment status was also connected to the likelihood of educators hearing students make negative comments about girls acting “too much like a boy” (11% for term, occasional, casual or substitute vs. 7% for permanent).

Similarly, more participants reported hearing negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl” on a daily or weekly basis if they approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education (16%, compared with 5% for those neutral on LGBTQ-inclusive education and 3% for those opposed), which may be connected to their greater sensitization to the issues. However, educators were only slightly more likely to hear negative remarks about girls acting “too much like a boy” on a daily or weekly basis if they approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education (8%) than if they were neutral (3%) or opposed (5%) to it.

The presence of a transphobic harassment policy in school was associated with lower reported cases of negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl” (11% weekly or daily, compared with 19% weekly or daily in schools without a policy) and in lower instances of negative remarks about girls acting “too much like a boy” (5% weekly or daily, compared with 11% weekly or daily in schools without a policy). Further, we found that educators who reported they had been provided

with sufficient training on these policies were less likely to report hearing negative comments about boys acting “too much like a girl” (6% for those who had adequate training or who were very well prepared compared with 26% for those who reported no training) or girls acting “too much like a boy” (4% for those who received adequate training or who were very well prepared, as compared with 14% for those who reported no training). As with the findings discussed earlier in this report, these numbers point to the effectiveness of policy when coupled with training.

There was no difference between Catholic school educators and secular school educators hearing negative comments about boys acting “too much like a girl” (with 14% of each reporting hearing remarks daily or weekly), and there was only a slight difference between Catholic school educators and secular school educators hearing negative comments about girls acting “too much like a boy” (9% Catholic and 7% secular). Where we found a bigger difference in educator awareness was in school demographic. For instance, the higher the percentage of students from low-income households, the greater the number of educators reporting students made negative remarks about the gender behaviour of others on a daily or weekly basis. In schools with less than 10% of students from low-income families, less

than a tenth of teachers reported hearing negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl” (8%) or girls acting “too much like a boy” (4%). However, in schools with 75% or more of students from low-income households, 28% reported hearing negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl” and 14% reported negative comments about girls acting “too much like a boy.” This suggests that students from more affluent families may experience more freedom of gender expression than students from lower-income families, or perhaps that students from lower-income families challenge gender conventions more often and trigger gender policing in the form of such comments.

Participant responses show minimal differences among grade levels. For educators working with students in early years, one-third (33%) reported never hearing negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl,” compared to 31% for educators working in both middle years and senior years. Similarly, almost half (46%) of educators in early years reported never hearing negative remarks about girls acting “too much like a boy,” compared to 45% for both middle years and senior years. The lack of differences among grade levels again points to the importance of attention to issues of gender expression in early years.

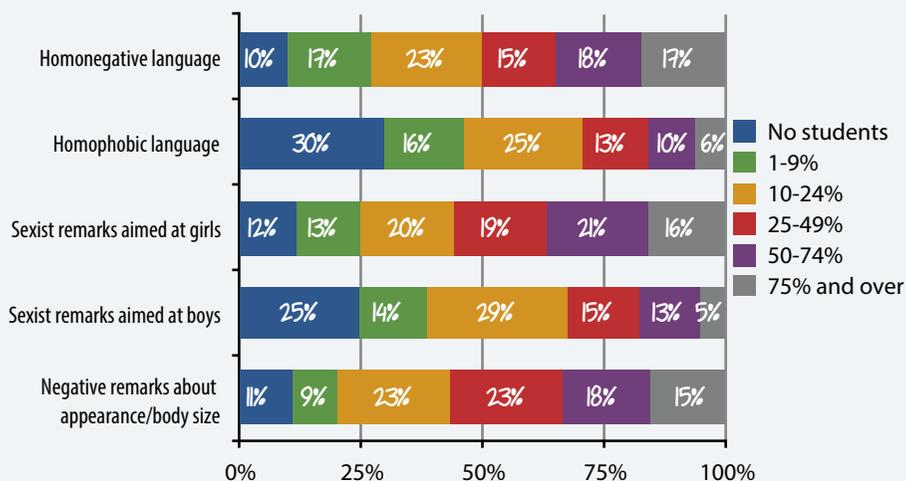
## OVERALL ESTIMATES OF ABUSIVE LANGUAGE USE BY STUDENTS AND STAFF

We asked all participants to report approximate percentages of students using various kinds of abusive language, including homonegative, homophobic, gender-negative, and transphobic comments and comments about body size and appearance. For instance, educators reported that approximately one-third of students made homonegative comments (33%), sexist remarks aimed at girls (34%), and negative remarks about appearance or body size (34%). Educators estimated that 1 in 5 students made homophobic comments (19%) and sexist remarks aimed at boys (20%). Following

these, participants reported 15% made negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl,” 10% made negative remarks about a girls acting “too much like a boy,” and 3% made transphobic remarks.

To look at this another way, when asked about the percentage of students using homonegative language, only 10% of educators reported that no students were making homonegative remarks and 17% of educators reported that over three-quarters (75% and over) of students were making such remarks. As shown in Figure 8, the majority of educators reported being aware of students making homophobic, homonegative and gender-negative comments in their schools.

**FIGURE 8: EDUCATORS' PERCENTAGE ESTIMATES OF STUDENTS USING ABUSIVE LANGUAGE**



One in five (22%) participants also reported hearing teachers use homonegative language at school. Most (20%) indicated that teachers used language such as “that’s so gay” only in the staff room, whereas 4% reported that such language was used in the presence of students.

Again, personal identity contributed to educator awareness of homonegative language use among teachers. LGBTQ educators were much more likely to report hearing teachers use homonegative language (36%) than were CH respondents (18%). Racialized educators were more likely (33%) than White (21%) or FNMI educators (19%) to hear such language. Those educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were much more likely to report hearing homonegative language (24%) than those who were neutral (12%) or opposed (9%). Even the participant’s role in school affected awareness of homonegative remarks, with guidance counsellors, psychologists and social workers more likely to report hearing homonegative language (28%) than teachers (21%) or administrators and non-teachers (19%).

As well, school context also contributed to the rates at which educators reported hearing teachers use homonegative language at school. Respondents from Catholic schools were more likely (28%) to report hearing educators use homonegative language than educators from secular schools (21%). Participants from cities or suburban areas were more likely (24%) than those from

small cities and non-remote towns (20%) or remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (14%). Participants from British Columbia reported the lowest likelihood of hearing educators use homonegative language (11%), followed by respondents in the Atlantic provinces and Québec (14%), respondents in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Territories and Labrador (all 19%), and finally, respondents in Ontario, 28% of whom reported hearing teachers use homonegative language.

Similarly, while over a third (34%) of respondents reported hearing educators use homophobic remarks such as “faggot” and “dyke” at school, most of the language was confined to the staff room (31%), with 7% reporting that such language was used in the presence of students. LGBTQ educators were almost twice as likely to report hearing teachers use homophobic language (54%) than were CH educators (29%). Again, racialized educators were more likely (54%) than White (34%) or FNMI (28%) educators to report hearing teachers use homophobic language. Participants who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were more than twice as likely (38%) to report hearing teachers use homophobic language than educators who were neutral (19%) or opposed (14%). Respondents’ roles in their school again showed varying levels of awareness of teachers using homophobic language: 43% of guidance counsellors,

34% of teachers, and 32% of administrators and other non-teachers reported hearing teachers use homophobic language.

There was no difference between educators from Catholic and secular schools (both reported 34%), but we again found educators from city or suburban area schools were more likely (37%) to report hearing homophobic comments than those from small city and non-remote town (34%) or remote/rural/reserve/AFB (18%) schools. There were relatively minor regional differences across the provinces, with Ontario again reporting the highest number of respondents hearing teachers use homophobic language (38%), followed by 31% from Atlantic provinces/Québec, 27% from the Territories/Labrador, 26% from Manitoba, 25% from British Columbia, and 23% from Alberta/Saskatchewan.

Although it is possible that most of the homophobic comments reported by our participants were made by a small number of their colleagues, this finding suggests that LGBTQ-inclusive education efforts must include professional development and disciplinary actions aimed at stopping this abusive behaviour and perhaps changing the attitudes behind it. While the numbers suggest that most homonegative and homophobic language used by educators may well occur in staff rooms rather than

in the presence of students, homophobic language used anywhere implies disrespect for LGBTQ people that may be expressed in subtler ways in interactions with students. Further, educators would normally not be privy to comments made by colleagues in their classrooms; therefore, the actual incidence may be higher. As a point of comparison, 10% of LGBTQ students in the Climate Survey reported hearing homophobic comments from teachers.

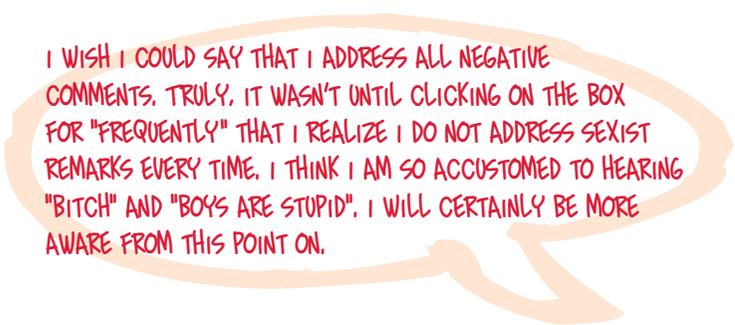
## **IMPACT OF HBTP HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS**

Whether direct harassment targeting LGBTQ students or subtler forms of homonegative and gender-negative attitudes pervading school culture, the impact on students can be substantial. Many participants in the Every Teacher Project survey reported being aware of HBTP harassment (as discussed earlier), and over half (55%) of those who were aware of HBTP harassment knew of instances in their school in which HBTP harassment led LGBTQ students to engage in self-harming behaviours. Educators also reported being aware of LGBTQ students being rejected by their parents (52%), considering suicide (47%), switching schools or school districts (40%), abusing drugs and/or alcohol (39%), dropping out of school (29%), retaliating against their harassers (28%), attempting suicide (18%),

and even dying by suicide (2%). These numbers were slightly higher for educators in higher grades, where respondents working in senior years were more likely to report incidents of LGBTQ students engaging in self-harming behaviours (56%), being rejected by their parents (57%), considering suicide (52%), switching schools or school districts (42%), abusing drugs and/or alcohol (43%), dropping out of school (33%), retaliating against their harassers (26%), attempting suicide (21%), and dying by suicide (3%).

Again, we found that other factors affected educators' awareness of the outcomes of HBTP harassment of students. For instance, LGBTQ teachers were much more likely to be aware of LGBTQ students retaliating against their harassers (37%) and attempting suicide (25%) than CH teachers (24% and 15% respectively). Guidance counsellors were more aware of LGBTQ students engaging in self-harming behaviours (74%) than both teachers (54%) and administrators (41%). While the gap is not as wide, guidance counsellors were also more aware of LGBTQ students' attempted suicides (53%) than teachers (47%) or administrators (39%). Finally, we found that educators working in Catholic schools were much more aware of LGBTQ students engaging in self-harming behaviours (65%) and switching schools or school districts (54%) as a result of HBTP harassment than respondents from secular schools (53% and 38% respectively).

Participants' high levels of awareness of the many painful and enduring consequences of HBTP harassment on LGBTQ students no doubt contributes to their strong support for LGBTQ-inclusive education.

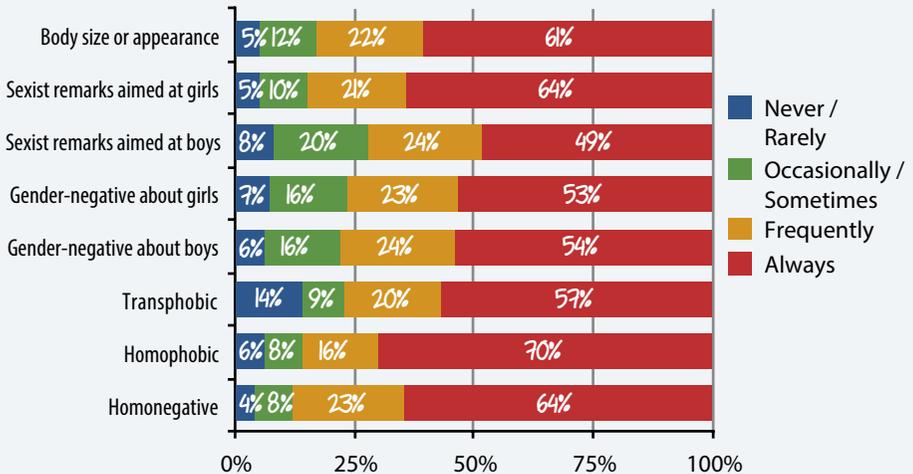


I WISH I COULD SAY THAT I ADDRESS ALL NEGATIVE COMMENTS. TRULY, IT WASN'T UNTIL CLICKING ON THE BOX FOR "FREQUENTLY" THAT I REALIZE I DO NOT ADDRESS SEXIST REMARKS EVERY TIME. I THINK I AM SO ACCUSTOMED TO HEARING "BITCH" AND "BOYS ARE STUPID". I WILL CERTAINLY BE MORE AWARE FROM THIS POINT ON.

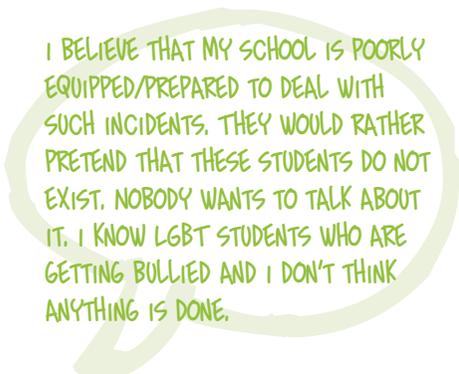
## EFFECTIVENESS IN ADDRESSING HARASSMENT

We asked participants who indicated that they had heard homonegative and homophobic comments how often they intervened upon hearing such comments from students. Nearly two-thirds (64%) reported that they always intervened when they heard students use homonegative comments such as “that’s so gay” and 70% always intervened when they heard homophobic comments such as “faggot” or “dyke” (see Figure 9). Intervention in incidents of transgender, gender-negative or sexist remarks, however, was somewhat less common. For instance, 57% of educators reported that they always intervened when students used transphobic comments, 54% when they heard negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl,” and 53% when they heard negative comments about girls acting “too much like a boy.”

**FIGURE 9: FREQUENCY OF INTERVENTION WHEN COMMENTS MADE BY STUDENTS**



If we compare these numbers to the Climate Survey, we find that students perceived teacher interventions much differently. For instance, when we consider homophobic comments, 19% of CH students said that school staff members never intervened when they heard homophobic comments; this number increases for LGBTQ students, fully a third of whom (33%), said that staff never intervened. The Climate Survey further breaks down the LGBTQ student numbers, reporting that 43% of transgender students and 32% of sexual minority students said teachers never intervened (35% of sexual minority female students and 30% of sexual minority male students). To look at this another way, only one-quarter of LGBTQ students reported that staff intervened “most of the time” or “always” when they heard homophobic remarks (25% of sexual minority females, 27% of sexual minority males, and 24% of transgender youth).



I BELIEVE THAT MY SCHOOL IS POORLY EQUIPPED/PREPARED TO DEAL WITH SUCH INCIDENTS. THEY WOULD RATHER PRETEND THAT THESE STUDENTS DO NOT EXIST. NOBODY WANTS TO TALK ABOUT IT. I KNOW LGBT STUDENTS WHO ARE GETTING BULLIED AND I DON'T THINK ANYTHING IS DONE.

Only 30% of educators felt that their schools respond effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment, while 49% believed their school's response was somewhat effective, and 21% maintained it was not effective. Teachers (28%) were far less likely to agree that their school responded effectively than were participants from the groups most often responsible for addressing incidents of HBTP harassment: school administrators (46%) and guidance counsellors (47%). Educators who opposed LGBTQ-inclusive education were more likely to report that their schools responds effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment (67%) than participants who were neutral (54%) or those who approved (25%), perhaps because they would be disinclined to implement further LGBTQ-inclusion efforts.

Participants from Catholic schools were more likely to report that their schools were not effective (33%) in responding to incidents of HBTP harassment than those from secular schools (19%). Conversely, participants from Catholic schools were almost as likely to report their schools responded effectively (28%) as those from secular schools (30%). LGBTQ educators were less likely to believe that their schools responded effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment (21%) than CH respondents (32%). Transgender participants were more likely (46%) than cisgender men (34%) and cisgender women (26%) to report that their schools responded well to incidents of HBTP harassment. White

participants (30%) were also more likely to report feeling that their school responded in an effective way, compared to 22% of FNMI and 20% of respondents from other racialized groups. Possible reasons for variation in perceptions could include not noticing the abuse, minimizing abuse and its impacts, and disinclination to make further efforts, though our data cannot shed light on inter-group differences in these regards.

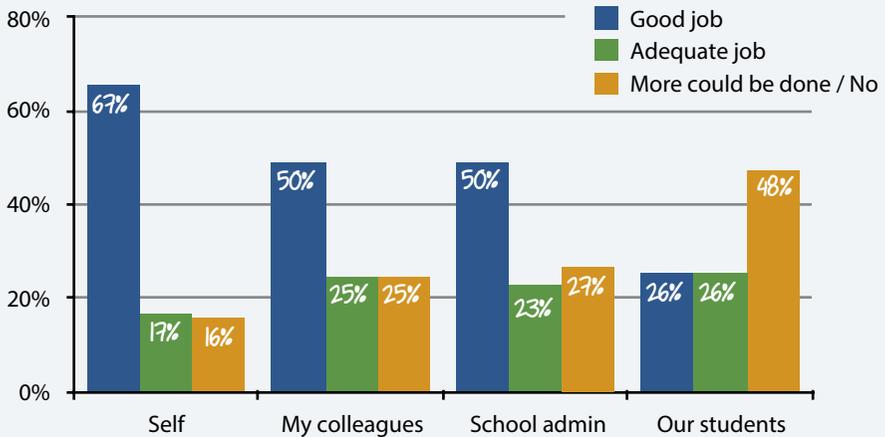
Educators from schools in a city or suburban area were more likely to report that their schools responded effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment (33%) than those from small cities and non-remote towns (28%) or remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (17%). Regional breakdowns varied, with 41% of educators from Manitoba reporting that their schools responded effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment; 37% of educators in Alberta/Saskatchewan; 33% of educators from the Atlantic provinces/Québec; 31% from British Columbia; 27% from Ontario; and 24% from the Territories/Labrador.

In schools with a policy, educators were far more likely to report that their schools responded effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment, especially when staff felt sufficiently trained on the policy. For instance, in schools with homophobic harassment policy, 38% of respondents felt their school responded effectively, compared to only 14% in schools without a policy. The effective intervention gap widens when comparisons are made between

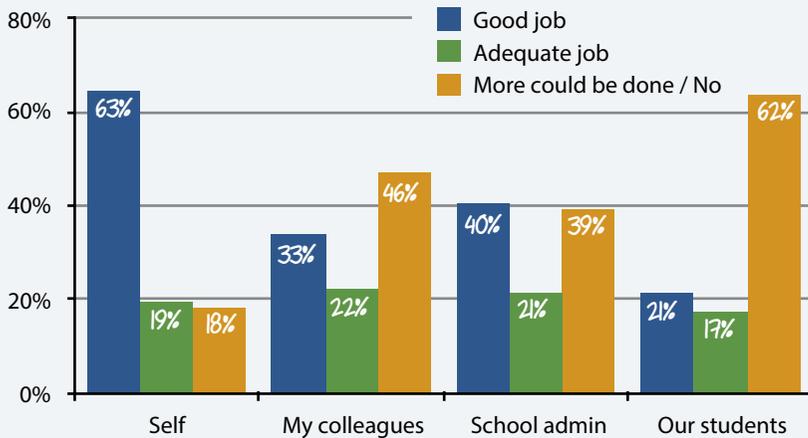
staff who were very well or adequately trained on this policy (56%), staff who were adequately trained but would have liked more (22%) and staff who had no training or inadequate training (7%). Schools with transphobic harassment policies showed similar trends. Participants from schools with a transphobic harassment policy were almost four times more likely to report that their school responded effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment (44% vs. 14% without policy). Again, when educators reported being very well or adequately trained, they were far more likely to report that their school responded effectively (61%, as compared to 28% of those who were adequately trained but would like more and 11% who were not trained or not adequately trained).

When asked about their effectiveness in addressing incidents of general harassment, 67% of educators reported personally doing a good job, though this number dropped a little when asked specifically about homophobic harassment (63%) and substantially when asked about transphobic harassment (50%). As shown in Figure 10, Figure 11, and Figure 12, educators were most likely to evaluate their own interventions in incidents of harassment as effective, followed by school administration's (50% general harassment, 40% homophobic harassment, 35% transphobic harassment), colleagues' (50% general, 33% homophobic, 26% transphobic) and students' (26% general, 21% homophobic, 18% transphobic) interventions.

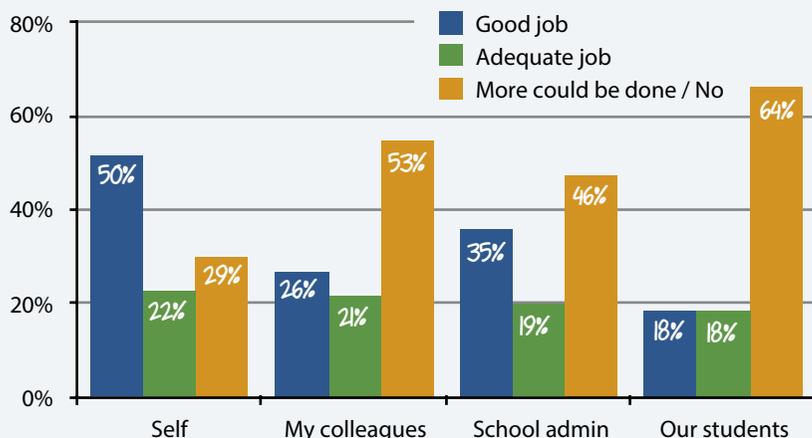
**FIGURE 10: EFFECTIVENESS IN ADDRESSING INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT GENERALLY**



**FIGURE 11: EFFECTIVENESS IN ADDRESSING INCIDENTS OF HOMOPHOBIC HARASSMENT**



**FIGURE 12: EFFECTIVENESS IN ADDRESSING INCIDENTS OF TRANSPHOBIC HARASSMENT**



Educators who identified as LGBTQ were less likely to see others as effective in addressing harassment in schools. For instance, 66% of LGBTQ educators reported that while they personally did a good job of addressing incidents of general harassment (compared with 68% of CH educators), 42% reported their colleagues did a good job (compared with 54% of CH), 45% reported their administration did a good job (compared with 52% CH), and 19% reported that students did a good job (compared with 29% CH). We found a similar trend when it came to incidents of HBTP harassment with the notable difference that LGBTQ educators were more likely to report doing a good job personally when it came to

incidents of homophobic harassment (70%) and transphobic harassment (52%) than CH educators (61% and 49% respectively).

Finally, when we looked at school location, we found that educators working in city and suburban area schools were generally as likely to feel they were personally doing a good job at addressing general harassment (69%), homophobic harassment (67%) and transphobic harassment (52%) as those from small cities and non-remote towns (69%, 61%, and 52% respectively). Educators from cities/suburban areas were similarly likely to see their colleagues as effective (50% general harassment, 35% homophobic, 27% transphobic) as respondents from small cities and non-remote towns (52% general, 31%

homophobic, 26% transphobic); and again, educators from cities/suburban areas were similarly likely to see their administration as effective (50% general, 43% homophobic, 36% transphobic) as respondents from small cities and non-remote towns (48% general, 38% homophobic, 33% transphobic). The largest differences were found for educators from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools, where 49% reported personally doing a good job of addressing incidents of general harassment/bullying (colleagues 39%, administration 52%), 39% for incidents of homophobic harassment/bullying (colleagues 22%, administration 24%), and 25% for transphobic harassment/bullying (colleagues 14%, administration 35%).

### **GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS, SOCIAL WORKERS, AND PSYCHOLOGISTS**

The vast majority of guidance counsellors (who are often the first responders in incidents of harassment) have had a student talk to them about being LGBTQ (86%), which is far higher than for teachers (33%) or administrators or non-teachers (29%).

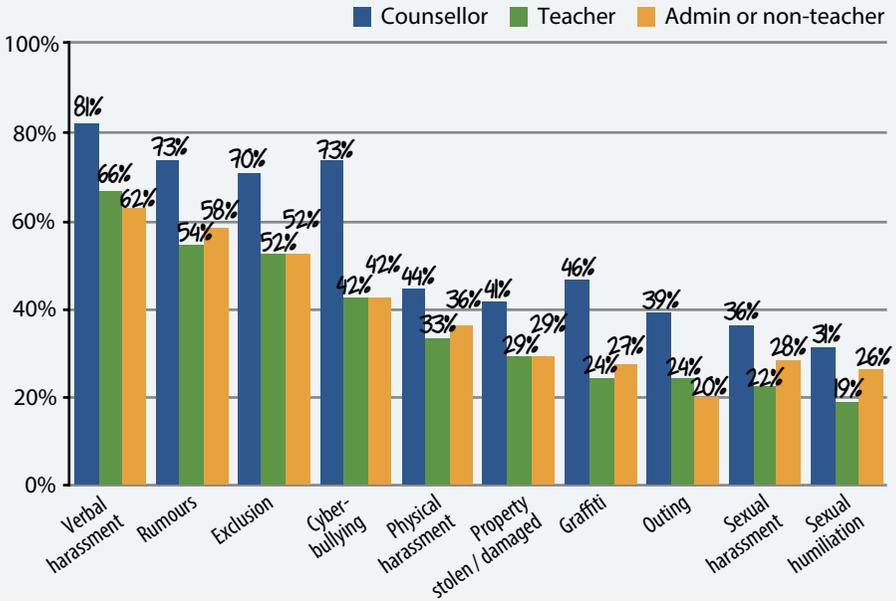
As shown in Figure 13, guidance counsellors were also more likely to be aware of incidents of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic harassment. For instance, 81% of guidance counsellors reported being aware of HBTP verbal harassment, compared to 66% of teachers and 62% of administrators or other non-teachers. Guidance counsellors

were more likely to be aware of incidents of physical violence (44%), while administrators and other non-teachers were slightly more likely to be aware (36%) than teachers (33%), which is no doubt due to the physical nature of the bullying that triggers a requirement for referral to counselling and disciplinary action from administrators.

Looking at the results for sexual orientation only, 70% of counsellors reported being aware of incidents of students being verbally harassed for being perceived to be LGBTQ, compared to 49% of teachers and 42% of administrators and other non-teachers. Similar results were found for physical harassment as 33% of counsellors were aware of such incidents for students perceived to be LGBTQ, while only 23% of teachers and 21% of administrators and other non-teachers reported being aware.

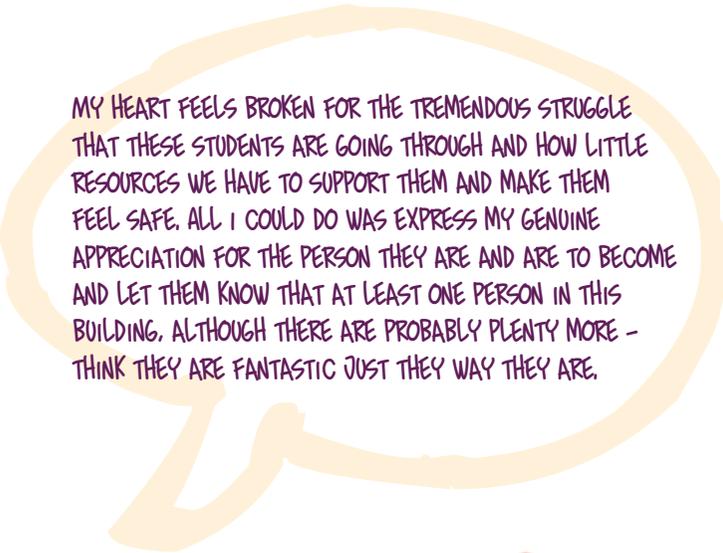
Guidance counsellors who have worked with LGBTQ students reported a wide range of reasons as to why LGBTQ students came to see them, ranging from benign questions around course selection to more serious issues like suicidality. Our findings suggest that not only were LGBTQ students reaching out to guidance counsellors, students were talking to counsellors about some very serious issues. For example, 70% of counsellors who had indicated working with LGBTQ students reported talking to them about mental health issues such as

**FIGURE 13: EDUCATORS' AWARENESS OF HBTP INCIDENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS (BY OCCUPATION)**

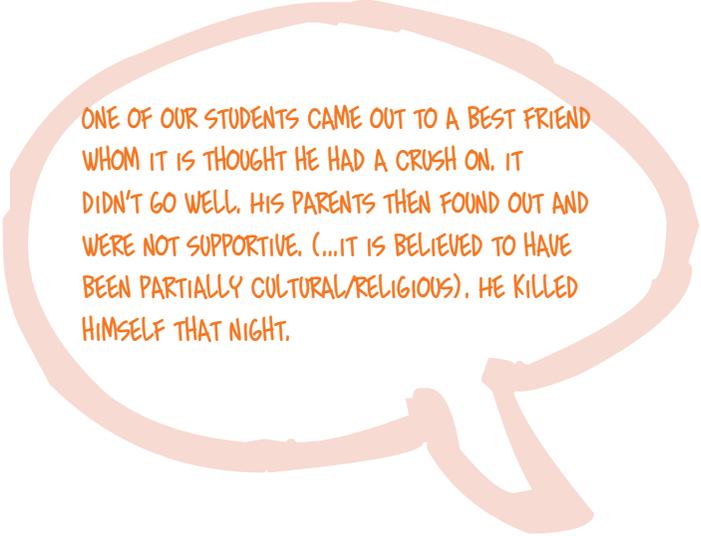


depression or anxiety, and 23% on issues around substance abuse. Over 3 in 5 (64%) reported working with LGBTQ students around identity issues, such as considering coming out, or issues around transitioning for transgender students. Three in five (60%) also mentioned dealing with issues of HBTP harassment with LGBTQ students. Alarmingly, half (55%) reported working with LGBTQ students around issues of

self-harming behaviour, and a third (33%) indicated working with LGBTQ students around issues of suicidal behaviour. These findings suggest that guidance counsellors need to be supported with professional development on the mental health issues faced by LGBTQ students and on LGBTQ-inclusive community resources to support students in crisis.



MY HEART FEELS BROKEN FOR THE TREMENDOUS STRUGGLE THAT THESE STUDENTS ARE GOING THROUGH AND HOW LITTLE RESOURCES WE HAVE TO SUPPORT THEM AND MAKE THEM FEEL SAFE. ALL I COULD DO WAS EXPRESS MY GENUINE APPRECIATION FOR THE PERSON THEY ARE AND ARE TO BECOME AND LET THEM KNOW THAT AT LEAST ONE PERSON IN THIS BUILDING, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE PROBABLY PLENTY MORE - THINK THEY ARE FANTASTIC JUST THE WAY THEY ARE.



ONE OF OUR STUDENTS CAME OUT TO A BEST FRIEND WHOM IT IS THOUGHT HE HAD A CRUSH ON. IT DIDN'T GO WELL. HIS PARENTS THEN FOUND OUT AND WERE NOT SUPPORTIVE. (...IT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS). HE KILLED HIMSELF THAT NIGHT.

## LGBTQ VISIBILITY AT SCHOOL

A foundational principle of inclusive education is that schools should ensure that students from marginalized identity groups can see clear signs that their identity groups are welcome and respected at school. Until recent years, it was rare for schools to have any form of LGBTQ visibility. We asked educators about the presence of various forms of LGBTQ visibility at their schools, including number and visibility of LGBTQ students and staff in their schools, LGBTQ student participation in school activities, and the presence of GSAs, events and resources.

### Awareness of LGBTQ students and staff

When we asked senior-years educators how many LGB students they were aware of in their school, we found that only 13% were not aware of any LGB students in their school within the past 12 months (7% were aware of 1 LGB student, 11% of 2 LGB students, 23% of 3 to 5 students, 15% of 6 to 10 students, and 18% of over 10 students). Those educators from schools with a homophobic harassment policy seemed to know more “out” LGBTQ youth. In other words, they were somewhat less likely to be unaware of LGB students in their school (only 9% of those with policy were not aware of any LGB students vs. 16% of those from schools without policy). There were minor differences between Catholic school educators and educators working in secular schools based on the number of students the

respondent was aware of (14% of Catholic school educators reported none; 43%, 1 to 5 LGB students; and 43%, over 5, whereas 13% of secular school educators reported none; 35%, 1 to 5 LGB students; and 52%, over 5).

Educators from schools in a city or suburban area were more likely to know of LGB students in their schools (6% none; 34%, 1 to 5 LGB students; 61%, over 5 LGB) than respondents from small city and non-remote town schools (21% none; 34%, 1 to 5 LGB students; 45%, over 5) or those from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (30% none; 56%, 1 to 5 LGB students; 14%, over 5).

Similarly, respondents who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were more likely to be aware of greater numbers of LGB students (12% none; 35%, 1 to 5 LGB students; 53%, over 5) than educators who were neutral (25% none; 43%, 1 to 5 LGB students; 32%, over 5) or opposed (26% none; 57%, 1 to 5 LGB students; 17%, over 5).

Overall, the numbers were lower, but the trends were similar, when we asked senior-years educators how many transgender students they were aware of in their schools. Over 3 out of 5 senior-years educators (61%) reported they were not aware of any transgender students in their school in the past 12 months (17% aware of 1 transgender student; 15% of 2; 7%, 3 or more). Half (51%) of senior-years educators from schools with transphobic harassment policies reported being aware of no transgender students in

their school compared to two-thirds (65%) of senior-years educators from schools without transphobic harassment policy. (We cannot know from our data whether policy makes people more attentive to gender variance among students, or the presence of transgender students precipitated policy development.) There was no difference between educators from Catholic schools and those from secular schools (61% of both reported none).

Educators from schools in a city or suburban area were most likely to know of transgender students in their schools (53% none; 47%, 1 or more transgender students) followed by respondents from small city and non-remote town schools (69% none; 31%, 1 or more transgender students) and then those from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (84% none; 16%, 1 or more).

Respondents who were opposed to LGBTQ-inclusive education were most likely to report being aware of no transgender students in their school (80%), followed by those who were neutral about LGBTQ-inclusive education (74%). Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were most likely to be aware of transgender students (60% reported none in their schools). One explanation for this difference might be that people opposed to LGBTQ inclusion may be disinclined to acknowledge the presence of LGBTQ students; or that students are more cautious about revealing their identities to

non-supportive adults in their school. In any event, the majority of participants who disapproved were unaware of the presence of transgender students.

When asked about the number of staff members they were aware of in their school who identified as LGB, we found there was low visibility among school staff. Respondents reported, on average, that they were aware of two LGB staff members. When asked how many staff members they were aware of who were transgender or transsexual, the average number dropped to .05 (in other words, only a few of our 3319 participants were aware of a transgender colleague in their school).

### **LGBTQ participation in school activities**

In discussing LGBTQ student participation in school activities, we grouped our questions around participation in sports and participation in school clubs or committees. We also analyzed reported awareness of LGB and transgender student participation separately.

Of those educators who were aware of LGB students being involved in sports at their school, 88% reported being aware of the student being involved in girls' team sports, 59% in boys' team sports, 34% in girls' individual sports, 31% in mixed team sports, 25% in boys' individual sports, and 20% mixed individual sports. Since more organized sports activities occur in senior grades (i.e., Grades

9 to 12), the numbers were higher among senior-years educators, with 92% of senior-years educators reporting being aware of LGB student involvement in girls' team sports, 63% in boys' team sports, 35% in girls' individual sports, 26% in mixed team sports, 25% in boys' individual sports, and 22% in mixed individual sports.

When it comes to transgender students, nearly half (48%) of participants reported that they did not know if any transgender students had participated in sports in their affirmed gender in the last year. Of those who knew whether transgender students had participated or not, only 3% of educators said they had; all respondents replying "yes" were senior-years educators.

Among senior-years educators, we found that respondents from schools with a GSA were more likely to report transgender student participation in their affirmed gender (6%) than educators from schools without a GSA (3%). Guidance counsellors were more likely to be aware of transgender student participation (19%) than teachers were (3%; too few administrator responses to report).

When it came to LGB participation in school clubs or committees, there were a substantial number of educators who reported that they did not know whether LGB students participated openly in school clubs or committees (38%), and an additional 14% chose not to answer the question. Of the respondents who knew and chose to answer

the question, 70% of educators reported being aware of LGB students participating in school clubs or committees. Guidance counsellors were most likely to be aware of LGB student participation (94%), followed by teachers (69%) and administration (54%). Further, educators from schools with a GSA were more likely to be aware of LGB student participation in clubs or committees (92%) than those from schools that did not have a GSA (49%). (But we do not know from the data whether respondents meant only that LGB students were involved in the GSA club, but perhaps not in other clubs or committees.) Those from schools with homophobic harassment policies were more likely to know of LGB student participation in clubs or committees (72%) than respondents from schools without such policies (65%); similarly, educators from schools with transphobic harassment policies were more likely to know of LGB student participation (76%) than those from schools without policy (63%).

Respondents who worked in Catholic schools were substantially less likely to report knowing of LGB students participating in clubs or committees (53%) than those from secular schools (73%). As well, educators working in larger schools and higher grade levels were more likely to report knowing of openly LGB students participating in school clubs or committees. Almost two-thirds (61%) knew of openly LGB students participating in school clubs or committees in middle

years and 86% knew of such students in senior years. Similarly, 32% of educators from schools with 250 students or fewer knew of LGB students participating in school clubs or committees, followed by 53% in 251 to 500 student schools, 65% for schools with 501 to 750 students, 88% for 751 to 1000 students, and 90% for schools with over 1000 students. In other words, the higher the grade level or bigger the school, the more likely educators were to be aware of LGB participation in clubs or committees. Educators from schools located in a city or suburban area were just as likely to be aware of LGB students participating in clubs or committees (73%) as were those who worked in small cities and non-remote towns (71%); however, respondents who worked in remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools were substantially less likely to report LGB student involvement (46%). Regionally, educators from British Columbia (77%) and the Atlantic provinces/Québec (75%) were most likely to report having had openly LGB students participate in clubs or committees in their schools, followed by Ontario (69%), Manitoba (62%), and finally, with substantially lower levels, Alberta/Saskatchewan (44%) and the Territories/Labrador (28%).

Nearly a third (29%) of educators reported that they did not know if any openly transgender students participated in clubs or committees at their school in the last year. Of those who knew, 19% reported they did

know of a transgender student participating in a school club or committee. Guidance counsellors were again more likely to know of transgender students' involvement (52%) than teachers (17%) or administration (18%). As well, educators from schools with GSAs were far more likely to report knowing of transgender student participation in clubs or committees than those from schools without GSAs (47% vs. 3%), although again, the involvement participants were signaling may have been the GSA itself. Similarly, respondents from schools with transphobic harassment policies (32%) and homophobic harassment policies (26%) were more likely to know of transgender student involvement in clubs or committees than educators from schools without such policies (12% and 9% respectively). Finally, Catholic school educators were less likely (12%) than secular school educators (21%) to report being aware of transgender student participation in school clubs or committees in the last year.

In summary, then, educators were more likely to see LGB student involvement in clubs or committees in senior years, secular schools, large schools, urban schools, and in schools with GSAs and/or homophobic or transphobic harassment policies. Guidance counsellors were more likely to be aware of the participation of transgender students.

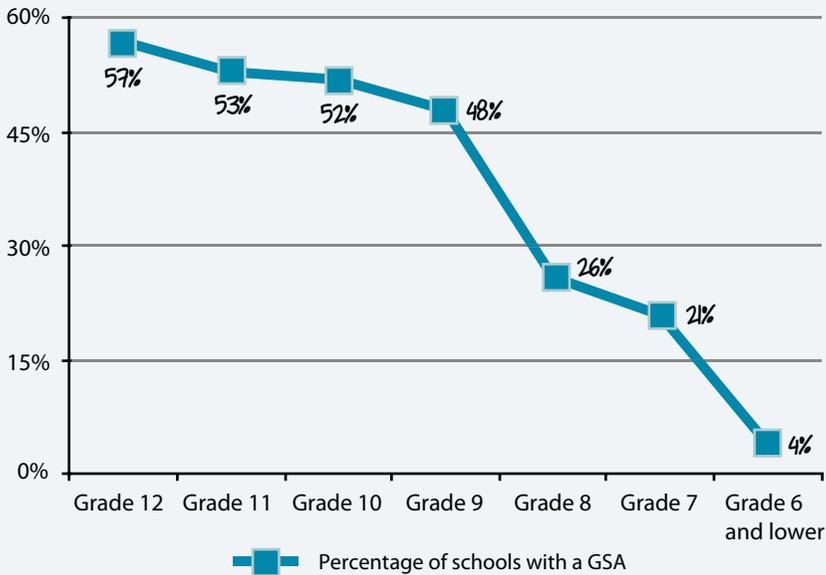
### **GSAs**

Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs have emerged as an important component of

LGBTQ-inclusive schools policies at the district and provincial level in recent years, and have proved to be so beneficial that legislation in several provinces requires principals to establish GSAs on student request. Over a quarter (27%) of respondents reported that their schools had a GSA or another club that focused on LGBTQ students and issues. Nearly two-thirds (64%) knew that their schools did not have a GSA, followed by 9% who did not know whether or not their schools had a GSA.

Not surprisingly, educators from schools with higher grade levels were more likely to report that their schools had a GSA. As shown in Figure 14, the percentage of educators who reported GSAs at their schools was directly proportional to the highest grade level offered at that school. For example, 57% participants from schools that included Grade 12 reported having GSAs, but only 4% of educators from schools with Grade 6 as its highest grade had such groups.

**FIGURE 14: PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS WITH GSAs (BY HIGHEST GRADE OFFERED AT SCHOOL)**



Educators from schools with senior-years grades in larger cities or in suburban areas were more likely to report that their school had a GSA (67%) than those from schools with senior years that were located in small cities and non-remote towns (36%) and those from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (9%). Educators from schools with larger student populations were generally more likely to report having GSAs: 8% of educators from schools with 250 or fewer students reported having a GSA; 19% in schools with 251 to 500 students; 48% in schools with 501-750 students; 73% in schools with 751-1000 students; and 71% in schools with over 1000 students.

Educators were more likely to report having a GSA at their school if the school had a homophobic harassment policy (60% of schools with GSAs had policy vs. 33% of schools without) or a transphobic harassment policy (61% of schools with GSAs vs. 38% without). Schools with lower percentages of students from low-income households were more likely to have GSAs (58% of schools with GSAs had less than 10% of students from low-income households; 59% from schools with 10-24%; 47% from schools with 25-49%; 33% from schools with 50-74%; 20% from schools with over 75% from low-income households). GSAs were generally less common in schools with higher percentages of FNMI students (51% of educators reported GSAs in schools with less than 10% FNMI student

population; 53% in schools with 10-24% FNMI; 41% in schools with 25-49%; and less than 5% in schools 50% and greater FNMI). However, the opposite holds true for high proportion of racialized student populations in school, with 35% reporting GSAs in schools with less than 10% racialized student population (vs. 72% for schools with over 75% racialized student population). When White students made up less than 10% of the school population, 73% of schools had a GSA, whereas only 45% of schools had GSAs when White student populations were 75% or more.

Regionally, participants in Ontario were most likely to report GSAs in their schools (64%), followed closely by Atlantic provinces/Québec (57%), BC (56%), and Manitoba (54%), with Alberta/Saskatchewan (14%) and the Territories/Labrador (8%) reporting significantly lower numbers.

Finally, participants from secular schools that included senior-years grades were far more likely to report having GSAs (56%) than



**GSA SAFE PLACES IN OUR SCHOOL BOARD ARE UNDER STRESS BECAUSE OF LACK OF SUPERVISION RESOURCES + FUNDING.**

those from Catholic schools (16%), although the number of both secular and religious schools with GSAs is expected to increase as more provincial governments and school divisions require schools to permit them.

To summarize, as with LGBTQ participation in clubs and committees in general, students are more likely to be able to enjoy the benefits of GSAs and the improved school climate associated with GSAs if they are in senior years, urban schools, secular schools, schools with homophobic or transphobic harassment policies, and most dramatically, schools with higher income families. Schools were less likely to have GSAs where there was a high proportion of FNMI students, but more likely with a high proportion of racialized students.

### Events and resources

One-quarter (25%) of senior-years educators reported that their school had not participated in any kind of an LGBTQ-themed event. Over half (55%) indicated that their school participated in an LGBTQ-themed human rights event or activity, 46% in a student conference or workshop, 10% in a Pride festival and 9% in a school play with LGBTQ themes. Moreover, some early-years educators reported that their school participated in human rights activities and events (16% vs. 46% for senior years), student conferences or workshops (10% vs. 39%), and awareness days (5% vs. 8%).

One in five (20%) educators reported that their school participated in awareness days in general. Only 10% of respondents reported that their school had not participated in any LGBTQ-related awareness days. Of those who did report that their school participated in LGBTQ-related awareness days, Pink Shirt Day was the most common event (61%), followed by Anti-Bullying Day (50%), International Stand Up to Bullying Day (40%), Day of Pink (31%), Spirit Day/Day of Purple (19%), Day of Silence (17%), and International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (17%). Additionally, 9% of educators reported that their school participated in LGBTQ Pride events.

Respondents working with early-years students were more likely to report participating in Anti-Bullying Day than respondents working with higher grades (52% vs. 49% in middle years) and Pink Shirt Day (66% vs. 58%), but less likely to participate in Day of Silence (4% vs. 26%), International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (8% vs. 23%), and Spirit Day/Day of Purple (10% vs. 26%). Those working with senior years (Grades 9 to 12) were more likely than early-years and middle-years educators (Pre-K to Grade 8) to report participating in Spirit Day/Day of Purple (25% vs. 9%), Day of Silence (25% vs. 4%), International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (22% vs. 9%), and Pride events (10% vs. 5%); however, senior-years

respondents were less likely to participate in Anti-Bullying Day (49% vs. 53%), Pink Shirt Day (57% vs. 67%), and Day of Pink (25% vs. 34%).

The presence of a GSA was positively associated with participation in LGBTQ-awareness days. For instance, greater numbers of educators from schools with GSAs reported their schools' participation in Day of Silence (37% compared to 4% of schools without GSAs), Spirit Day/Day of Purple (35% vs. 11%), LGBTQ Pride events (17% vs. 3%), Ally Week (13% vs. 1%), Pink Shirt Day (68% vs. 57%), International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (25% vs. 14%), LGBT History Month (8% vs. 1%), and Pink Triangle Day (5% vs. 1%).

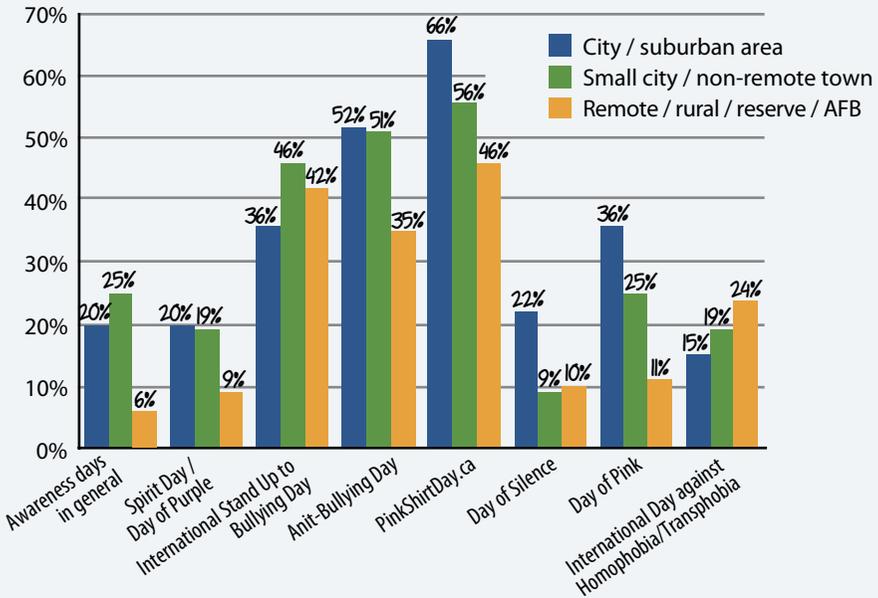
Homophobic harassment policies were also positively associated with participation in awareness days generally, whether LGBTQ-themed or not. Higher numbers of educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies than from those without such policies reported participating in Pink Shirt Day (67% vs. 50%), International Stand Up to Bullying Day (46% vs. 29%), Day of Pink (36% vs. 21%), Day of Silence (22% vs. 7%), Anti-Bullying Day (53% vs. 39%), awareness days in general (23% vs. 10%), and Pride events (12% vs. 3%). Similar results were found for schools with transphobic harassment policies.

A third factor was school location, which increased the likelihood of educators

participating in LGBTQ-awareness days. Educators from schools from cities and suburban areas were most likely to report participating in LGBTQ Pride events (11% compared to 6% for small cities and non-remote towns and none for remote/rural/reserve/AFB). Interestingly, as shown in Figure 15, even though educators from city and suburban area schools were less likely to report participating in awareness days in general (20% vs. 25% small cities and non-remote towns vs. 6% remote/rural/reserve/AFB), they were generally more likely to participate in LGBTQ-awareness days. There were two exceptions to this trend, however: We found that educators from schools in small cities and non-remote towns were most likely to participate in International Stand Up to Bullying Day (46%), followed by remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (42%) and then city and suburban area schools (36%). We also found that educators in city and suburban area schools were least likely to report participating in International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (15%), with educators from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools being most likely to participate (24%).

Finally, Catholic school educators were less likely to report they celebrated awareness days in general than those from secular schools (7% vs. 22%), though more Catholic school educators reported celebrating the more generic Anti-Bullying Day than secular

**FIGURE 15: PARTICIPATION IN LGBTQ-AWARENESS DAYS (BY SCHOOL LOCATION)**



school educators (69% vs. 48%). There were still a large number of Catholic school respondents who reported participating in awareness days with LGBTQ roots, notably International Stand Up to Bullying Day (36% vs. 41%) and Pink Shirt Day (58% vs. 62%), although some schools did not acknowledge more than a generic concern for bullying in their versions of the events, and our data cannot tell us whether the events

experienced by our participants included an LGBTQ focus or an acknowledgment of HBPT bullying.

Only 8% of senior-years educators indicated that their school had no form of LGBTQ visibility. Over two-thirds (68%) reported that their schools had LGBTQ pictures or posters, 54% had a visible safe space or ally stickers, and 36% had books

and/or videos.

Educators from early-years schools also reported some forms of LGBTQ visibility at their schools, such as: books and/or videos (21% vs. 30% for senior years), posters or pictures (24% vs. 57%), and safe space/ally stickers (18% vs. 45%).

However, only 13% of senior-years educators reported having LGBTQ curriculum as a resource, which reflects the absence of relevant curriculum development at the provincial and school district level. Results were similar for educators from schools with only early-years grades (14%). These numbers speak to a situation well-recognized in the field, where teachers have not been provided with curriculum resources and have been left largely on their own in developing inclusive classroom content.

The gap between Catholic schools and secular schools was wider when it came to LGBTQ-themed events, with only 17% of respondents from Catholic schools reporting participation in LGBTQ-themed events (compared with 50% from secular schools). The wider gap may reflect that events are more acutely visible than classroom discussions and often require the prior approval of school or district administration. Educators from Catholic schools that held events reported these events to be centred around human rights events or activities (13% vs. 39% secular schools) and student conferences and workshops (11% vs. 30%

secular schools).

We found a similar trend when it came to LGBTQ forms of visibility at school. Only 28% of educators from Catholic schools reported some form of LGBTQ visibility at their school (compared with 70% from secular schools). Most common forms of LGBTQ visibility were safe space or ally stickers (16% vs. 37% secular schools), posters or pictures (12% vs. 50%), pamphlets (8% vs. 28%), and books (7% vs. 32%).

We found interesting regional variations based on the types of interventions in schools. For participation in LGBTQ-themed events and LGBTQ visibility in schools, Nova Scotia, Québec, BC and Ontario educators reported the highest levels of involvement and visibility, with Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Territories reporting among the lowest. For example:

- ⇒ Educators reported participating in LGBTQ-themed events (Nova Scotia 60%; Québec 52%; Ontario 50%; BC 48%; Manitoba 39%; New Brunswick 34%; Newfoundland and Labrador 33%; Yukon 27%; Prince Edward Island 22%; Alberta 15%; Saskatchewan 13%; Northwest Territories 3%; Nunavut 3%). Specific types of events included:
  - » human rights events or activities (Québec 45%; Nova Scotia 43%; Ontario 36%; BC 34%; Manitoba 34%; Yukon 25%; New

- Brunswick 22%; Newfoundland and Labrador 21%; PEI 19%; Alberta 13%; Saskatchewan 9%; Northwest Territories 5%; Nunavut 3%), and
- » student conferences or workshops (Nova Scotia 45%; Ontario 31%; Québec 31%; New Brunswick 25%; Manitoba 24%; BC 24%; Newfoundland and Labrador 18%; Alberta 9%; Saskatchewan 4%; there were too few respondents in PEI and the Territories to report on).

⇒ Educators reported participating in various efforts to increase LGBTQ visibility at school (Nova Scotia; BC 75%; Newfoundland and Labrador 71%; Ontario 66%; Québec 54%; Manitoba 63%; New Brunswick 63%; Prince Edward Island 59%; Yukon 51%; Saskatchewan 42%; Alberta 34%; Northwest Territories 27%; Nunavut 12%). Specific visibility efforts included:

- » posting safe space or ally stickers (Ontario 45%; Manitoba 37%; BC 34%; New Brunswick 31%; Alberta 22%; Québec 22%; PEI 19%; Newfoundland and Labrador 17%; Saskatchewan 11%; Nova Scotia 9%; there were too few respondents to report on the Territories),
- » hanging posters or

- pictures (Nova Scotia 64%; Newfoundland and Labrador 57%; BC 54%; Ontario 47%; New Brunswick 46%; Québec 46%; PEI 41%; Manitoba 38%; Alberta 19%; Saskatchewan 19%; too few respondents to report on in the Territories),
- » making pamphlets available (Nova Scotia 41%; Québec 32%; Newfoundland and Labrador 29%; Manitoba 26%; Ontario 24%; New Brunswick 22%; BC 19%; Alberta 11%; Saskatchewan 8%; too few respondents in PEI and the Territories to report on), and
- » making books available (BC 38%; Manitoba 32%; Nova Scotia 37%; Ontario 33%; Newfoundland and Labrador 23%; PEI 22%; Québec 22%; Saskatchewan 19%; New Brunswick 16%; Alberta 14%; there were too few respondents in the Territories to report on).

There was little difference between urban and rural contexts for educators including LGBTQ content in the curriculum (see “Classroom and school-level practices” below); however, there were more substantial differences when it came to other forms of inclusion. For instance, educators from urban area schools were more likely to report

participating in LGBTQ-themed events (cities/suburban areas 55%, small cities/non-remote towns 33%, remote/rural/reserve/AFB 19%). Participants from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools reported particularly low involvement for human rights events and activities with LGBTQ components (9% vs. 43% for cities/suburban areas and 27% for small cities/non-remote towns) and for student conferences or workshops (7% vs. 32% for cities/suburban areas and 22% small cities/non-remote towns). One possible reason for the significantly lower numbers in remote areas may be the fact that these areas do not have large enough populations within their schools and classrooms to be able to host these types of events. Interestingly, however, remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools were a little more likely to report being involved in LGBTQ-themed school plays (8% vs. 6% for city/suburban area and 3% for small city/non-remote town). Similar results were found for LGBTQ forms of visibility at school, where 72% of participants from a cities and suburban areas reported various forms of visibility as compared to 53% in small cities and non-remote towns and 42% in remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools. Safe space or ally stickers were far more popular in cities and suburban school settings (42% vs. 23% for small city/non-remote town vs. 20% for remote/rural/reserve/AFB) as were books (33% vs. 22% small city/non-remote town and 15% for remote/rural/reserve/AFB) and posters (50% vs. 38% for small city/non-remote town and

24% for remote/rural/reserve/AFB).

Educators from schools with larger student populations reported higher levels of participation in LGBTQ-themed events. There was a steady rise in the likelihood that participants were involved with LGBTQ-themed events based on the size of the student population, with only 17% of educators from schools with 250 or fewer students reporting that they had participated, 29% from schools with 251 to 500 students, 41% with 501 to 750 students, 69% with 751 to 1000 students, and 84% from schools with over 1000 students. Again, this may be due to the fact that larger schools were better able to host events coupled with the fact that larger schools are generally found in urban areas where support of LGBTQ-inclusive education is higher (see above).

There was a relation between the presence of school homophobic and transphobic harassment policies and the likelihood of other activities and events being present in school. In schools where there were homophobic harassment policies, 55% of participants reported holding LGBTQ-themed events in schools (compared with 32% for those without policies). In schools with transphobic harassment policies, 56% reported holding LGBTQ-themed events (35% for those without policies). Human rights events or activities were also more common in schools with homophobic harassment policies (42% vs. 23% without policies) and transphobic

harassment policies (43% vs. 25% without policies). LGBTQ-themed student conferences and workshops were over twice as likely in schools with homophobic harassment (37% vs. 12%) and transphobic harassment (35% vs. 18%) policies. Similarly, the presence of policy strongly increased the likelihood that participants reported other forms of LGBTQ visibility in their schools. Overall, 72% of participants from schools with homophobic harassment policies reported other forms of LGBTQ visibility (compared with 49% for those without policies) and 73% from schools with transphobic harassment policies (compared with 53% without policies). The presence of a transphobic harassment policy revealed slightly greater involvement in LGBTQ inclusion efforts than the presence of a homophobic harassment policy, perhaps because transphobic harassment policies have been a more recent emergence and typically follow from an earlier period of LGB-focused policies that involved inclusion efforts. For instance, schools with transphobic harassment policies were more likely to have:

- ⇒ posters and pictures on display (54% with transphobic harassment policies vs. 35% without, compared with 51% in schools with homophobic harassment policies vs. 31% without),
- ⇒ safe space/ally stickers (42% with transphobic harassment policies vs. 26% without, compared with 40% with homophobic harassment policies vs.

22% without),

- ⇒ books (40% with transphobic harassment policies vs. 22% without, compared with 35% with homophobic harassment policies vs. 20% without), and
- ⇒ pamphlets (33% with transphobic harassment policies vs. 17% without, compared with 30% with homophobic harassment policies vs. 13% without).

Almost all senior-years educators (97%) reported that their schools had resources for students that addressed LGBTQ issues. Examples of resources include: having a teacher who identified as an ally (66%), having a guidance counsellor as an ally (62%), having a GSA (56%), having resources in the school library (43%), and having at least one teacher who identified as LGBTQ (28%). Even though educators from early-years schools (i.e., Pre-K to Grade 4) were less likely to report that their schools had LGBTQ resources for their students, many still reported having resources for students on LGBTQ issues. For instance, 40% indicated that their schools had a teacher who identified as an ally, 32% had a guidance counsellor who identified as an ally, 30% had resources in the school library, 19% had one or more LGBTQ teachers, and 6% had a GSA.

## PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES

### EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES AND VALUES

This section reports on our findings in the area of participants' values and perspectives on LGBTQ-inclusive education.

#### Homonegativity

In order to better understand educators' general attitudes toward LGBTQ issues in schools, we used a modified version of Morrison and Morrison's (2011) Modern Homonegativity Scale and presented a series of statements for which respondents could report their level of agreement or disagreement on a Likert scale. As shown in Figure 16, educators showed strong agreement with positive statements in support of LGBTQ students and their inclusion in schools. With 88% of educators agreeing that "LGBTQ people still need to work for inclusion in schools," educators demonstrated that they recognized the extent of work needed to provide safe and supportive school environments for LGBTQ students. Not surprisingly, LGBTQ educators were even more likely to agree (77% strongly, 21% somewhat, 1% neutral, 1% disagree) that "LGBTQ students do not have all the protections they need" (77% strongly, 21% somewhat, 1% neutral, 1% disagree).

FIGURE 16. HOMONEGATIVITY SCALE – POSITIVE ITEMS

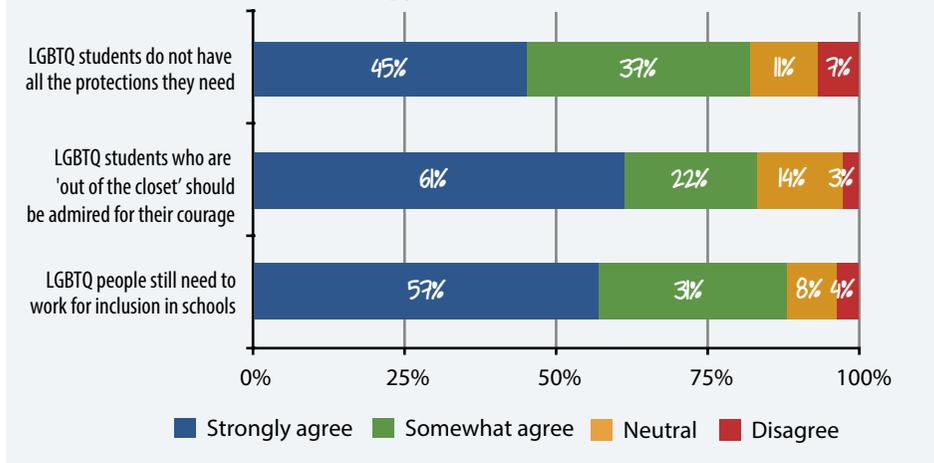


Figure 17 shows some of the negative statements we presented to educators to which they still responded with generally favourable attitudes toward LGBTQ issues in schools. The “negative” statement that educators were most likely to agree with was “LGBTQ people seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals and ignore the ways they are the same” (agreement with which may signify a recognition of what equity entails, more than a lack of support).

**FIGURE 17: HOMONEGATIVITY SCALE – NEGATIVE ITEMS**

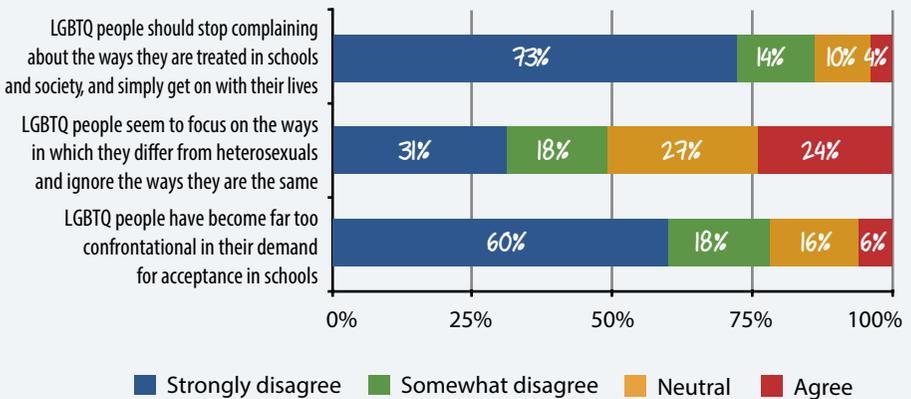
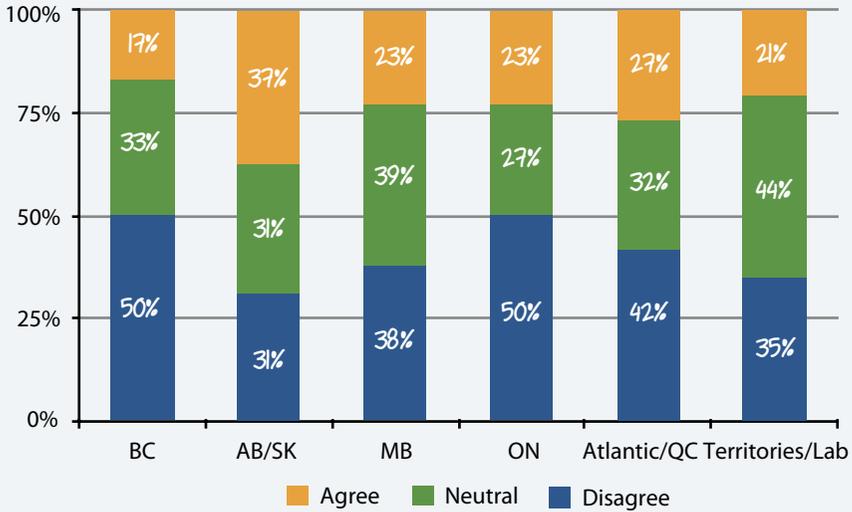
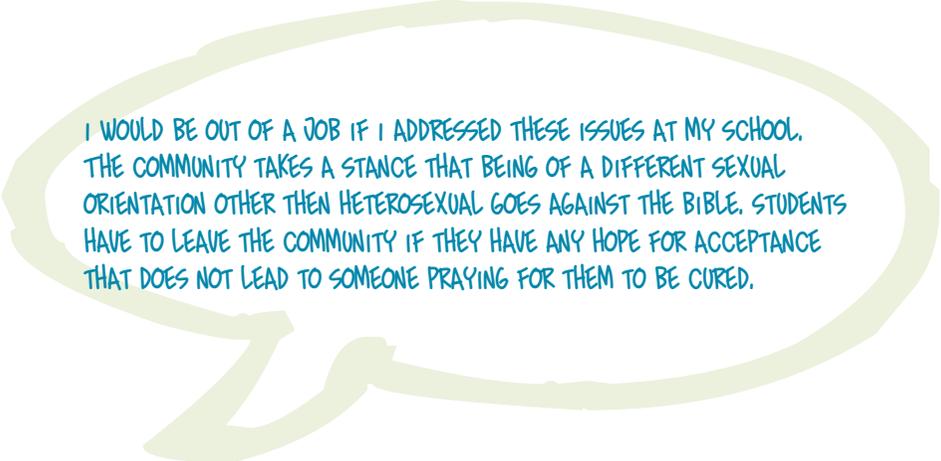


Figure 18 shows the regional variation of educator responses to the statement “LGBTQ people seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals and ignore the ways they are the same.” This statement generated the highest rate of “neutral” responses, ranging from almost half (44%) in the Territories/Labrador to just over a quarter (27%) in Ontario. The highest level of agreement with this statement was found among educators in Alberta/Saskatchewan (37%), with the lowest in British Columbia (17%).

**FIGURE 18: AGREEMENT THAT "LGBTQ PEOPLE SEEM TO FOCUS ON THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY DIFFER FROM HETEROSEXUALS AND IGNORE THE WAYS THEY ARE THE SAME" (BY REGION)**



School location also affected educators’ perspectives and attitudes concerning LGBTQ issues in school. For example, over a third (38%) of educators from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools agreed that “LGBTQ people seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals and ignore the ways they are the same” compared to 23% of respondents who worked in cities or suburban areas and 23% of those who taught in a small cities and non-remote towns. They were less likely to agree that “LGBTQ students do not have all the protections they need” (68%) than participants from cities or suburban areas (83%) or respondents from small cities and non-remote towns (84%). Yet there was no significant difference in responses to the statement “LGBTQ students who are ‘out of the closet’ should be admired for their courage,” to which 84% of educators working in remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools agreed, the same percentage as for educators from cities or suburban areas (84%), and 82% from small cities and non-remote towns.

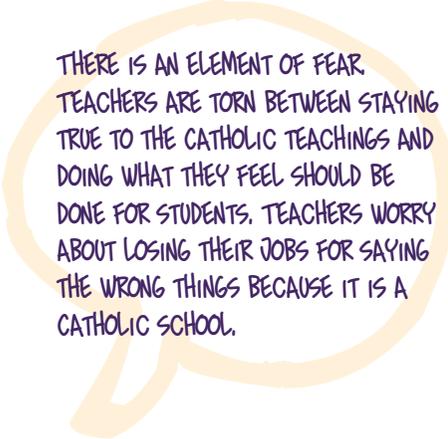


I WOULD BE OUT OF A JOB IF I ADDRESSED THESE ISSUES AT MY SCHOOL. THE COMMUNITY TAKES A STANCE THAT BEING OF A DIFFERENT SEXUAL ORIENTATION OTHER THEN HETEROSEXUAL GOES AGAINST THE BIBLE. STUDENTS HAVE TO LEAVE THE COMMUNITY IF THEY HAVE ANY HOPE FOR ACCEPTANCE THAT DOES NOT LEAD TO SOMEONE PRAYING FOR THEM TO BE CURED.

Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education practices expressed more favourable attitudes in general on LGBTQ topics than those who were opposed and even those who were neutral about LGBTQ-inclusive education. For instance, 92% of respondents who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education agreed that “LGBTQ people still need to work for inclusion in schools,” compared to 51% of those who were neutral on LGBTQ-inclusive education and 23% of those opposed. Similarly, educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were far less likely to agree that “LGBTQ people have become far too confrontational in their demands for acceptance in schools,” compared to 27% of those neutral and 64% of those opposed to LGBTQ-inclusive education.

Finally, Catholic school educators were far less likely to agree that “LGBTQ people still need to work for inclusion in schools”

(70%) than respondents who worked in secular schools (91%), even though Catholic schools were less likely to have GSAs and other forms of LGBTQ inclusion. Yet, there were smaller differences in relation to the statement “LGBTQ students who are ‘out of the closet’ should be admired for the courage,” to which three-quarters (75%) of Catholic school educators agreed, compared with 84% of respondents who worked in secular schools. While they were somewhat more likely to agree that “LGBTQ people seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals and ignore the ways they are the same” (32% vs. 23% secular), respondents from Catholic schools were also only somewhat less likely than their secular school counterparts to agree that “LGBTQ students do not have all the protections they need” (73% vs. 84%).



THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF FEAR. TEACHERS ARE TORN BETWEEN STAYING TRUE TO THE CATHOLIC TEACHINGS AND DOING WHAT THEY FEEL SHOULD BE DONE FOR STUDENTS. TEACHERS WORRY ABOUT LOSING THEIR JOBS FOR SAYING THE WRONG THINGS BECAUSE IT IS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

### **Educators approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education**

The vast majority of educators (85%) reported that they approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education, with 72% indicating strong approval and 13% approving somewhat. Another 11% said they were neutral, followed by 4% who were opposed (2% somewhat opposed and 2% strongly opposed).

Regionally, educator approval for LGBTQ-inclusive education showed very little difference across Canada. British Columbia, a province where historically there has been a great deal of public awareness and discussion of LGBTQ issues in the context of schools, often initiated by high profile legal challenges, showed the highest approval for LGBTQ-inclusive education (90%), followed by Ontario (87%), Atlantic provinces/Québec

(86%), the Territories/Labrador (85%), and Manitoba (81%), although all the figures were high; Alberta/Saskatchewan participants reported the lowest level of approval (74%).

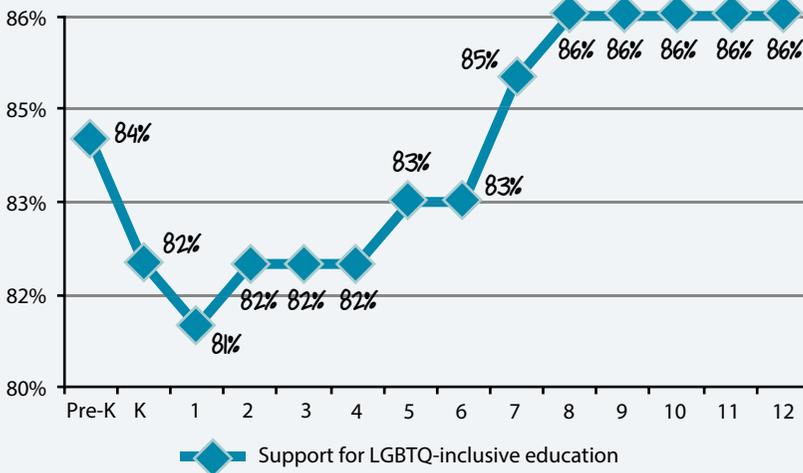
Not surprisingly, almost all LGBTQ educators (99%) approved of inclusive education, with only 1% being neutral, compared to 81% of CH respondents who approved, 14% who were neutral, and 6% who opposed. Further, transgender participants (97%) were much more likely to approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education than cisgender women (86%) and cisgender men (82%), although both figures were still high. Respondents from racialized groups were the most likely to approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education (92%), followed by 89% of FNMI and 85% of White educators.

Religious schools are often assumed to be sites that are hostile to LGBTQ-inclusive education, but educators from Catholic schools were only slightly less likely to approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education (83% vs. 85% of respondents from secular schools), and slightly more likely to be opposed to it (6% vs. 4%). This suggests that the relationship between educators' perspectives on the issue and the official perspectives of their schools is not a straightforward one.

Even though early-years educators were slightly less likely (81%) to approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education than middle-years (86%) or senior-years educators (86%), there was still widespread approval. Further, early-years

educators were no more likely to agree that teachers should be able to opt out of LGBTQ-inclusive education if it is against their religious beliefs (18% vs. 18% middle years vs. 19% senior years). Educators showed widespread support for LGBTQ-inclusive education across all grade levels, with only slightly higher levels of support in senior years (81% of educators in Grade 1 increasing to 86% in Grade 12). Interestingly, this increasing support trend was broken only by slightly higher support at Pre-K (84%) and K (82%) levels than in Grades 1 to 5 (see Figure 19).

**FIGURE 19: SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (BY GRADE)**



Our analysis also uncovered interesting relationships between educators' approval of LGBTQ-inclusive education and awareness of hostile language and harassment. For example:

- ⇒ Respondents who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were also more likely to report hearing comments like "that's so gay" at least weekly in their school (53%). While 40% of respondents opposed to LGBTQ-inclusive education reported hearing such comments, only

28% of educators who were neutral about LGBTQ-inclusive education reported hearing homonegative comments at least weekly.

- ⇒ Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were more likely to be aware of verbal harassment of LGBTQ or perceived LGBTQ students (72%) than those who were neutral (48%) and those who opposed (31%). A similar pattern was found for incidents of physical aggression where 36% of educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were aware of such incidents, compared to 24% who were neutral and 14% who opposed it.
- ⇒ Educators supportive of LGBTQ-inclusive education were more aware of students who were verbally harassed because they were perceived to be LGB (56%) than those who were neutral (17%) or those who opposed (21%). Similar results were found for physical victimization of students perceived to be LGB where 26% of participants who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive educator were aware, compared to 11% of educators who opposed and 9% who were neutral.
- ⇒ For gender identity and expression harassment, similar results were found for being aware of instances in which boys had been verbally harassed for acting “too much like a girl” (54% for

educators who approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education vs. 19% for those who opposed and 33% for those who were neutral). Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were also more likely to be aware of instances where girls were verbally harassed for acting “too much like a boy” (33%, vs. 16% for those who were neutral and 11% for those who were opposed).

- ⇒ Almost two-thirds (66%) of educators who opposed LGBTQ-inclusive education felt that their school responded effectively to HBTP bullying, followed by 54% of respondents who were neutral and 25% who approved.

It is noteworthy here that educators opposed to LGBTQ-inclusive education were less likely to hear homophobic comments than those who approve of it, even though, presumably, people might feel it is safer to make HBTP comments in their presence. Those on the fence were least likely to hear such comments, perhaps because they are not concerned about the issue. A possible explanation is that educators who were most exposed to homonegative comments were most likely to think LGBTQ-inclusive education necessary. Conversely, being opposed to LGBTQ-inclusive education could make educators more likely to maintain that HBTP harassment was not widespread and that their schools’ responses were adequate. (Relationships such as these will be explored in future reports and publications.)

### Educators accept responsibility for ensuring LGBTQ students' safety

The survey approached the question of participants' approval of LGBTQ-inclusive education in a second question that asked their level of agreement with the following statement: "All school staff have a responsibility to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for all students, including LGBTQ students." Educators overwhelmingly strongly agreed (94%) with this statement, followed by 4% who somewhat agreed. Less than 2% were neutral, and less than 1% disagreed.

As discussed earlier, 97% of respondents answered that they considered their schools to be safe, but only 72% considered their schools safe for LGB students, and 53% for transgender students. This suggests that some educators were not considering LGBTQ students when assessing school safety generically, but when educators were asked to consider the situation of LGBTQ students, they gauged the safety of LGBTQ students as lower than that of the school population generally. It is not surprising, given educators' high level of awareness of HBTP harassment (e.g., 67% aware of verbal harassment, 53% physical harassment, 23% sexual harassment), that their perception of safety was lower for LGBTQ students.

When further probed on the meaning of the word "safety," nearly two-thirds (63%) of educators selected "inclusion (e.g., through



IT IS A SENSITIVE ISSUE AND WE ARE NOT ENCOURAGED TO DISCUSS SEXUAL ORIENTATION WITH OUR STUDENTS. WE ARE ALLOWED TO PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ANYONE IN HARM, BUT EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS, OR OPINIONS ARE HIGHLY DISCOURAGED.

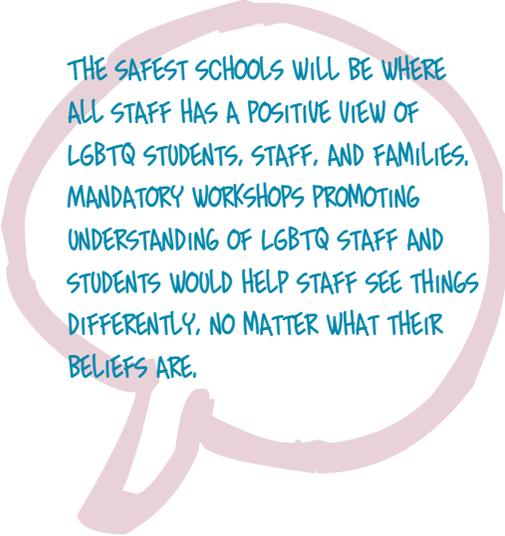
curriculum, school clubs and events, and policy." Nearly a quarter (23%) indicated that safety means "regulation of behaviour (e.g., through dress code, restrictions of clubs, and a code of conduct)," while only 3% chose "security (e.g., through metal detectors, ID tags, cameras, and hall monitors)." The remaining 11% elected to record their own meaning, with 4% defining safety as a "sense of belonging or acceptance of diversity," 3% as a combination of "inclusion and regulation," 2% as "freedom from bullying" or "safety and respect with punishment, if necessary," and 2% as a combination of inclusion, regulation of behaviour, and security.

The finding that most participants viewed safety as requiring inclusion suggests that most teachers share the perspective evident in "safe and inclusive schools" policy and legislation that safe schools are inclusive schools. This was borne out by comparing the responses of participants who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education to those who

disapproved or were neutral, where we found that 69% of participants who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education reported that safety meant inclusion to them. However, we also found that 53% of those who were neutral and 41% of those who were opposed also indicated that safety means inclusion, which suggests that some educators opposed LGBTQ inclusion even though they believed safety required inclusion. Other educators who reported being opposed to LGBTQ-inclusive education indicated that safety should be achieved through regulation of behaviour (49%), compared to 40% of those who were neutral and only 20% of those who approved.

Unsurprisingly, LGBTQ educators were more likely to link safety to inclusion (79% vs. 63% CH educators). They were also less likely to link safety to regulation of student behaviour (14% vs. 26%), with its obvious negative implications for freedom of gender expression. Racialized educators were also more likely to support safety through inclusion (75%, followed by 69% FNMI and 66% White respondents) and less likely to support safety through regulation (11%, vs. 23% FNMI and 24% White). One explanation for these differences could be that educators with marginalized identities were more apt to recognize the threats to safety posed not only by un-inclusive schools but by regulation of behaviour.

Educators from schools in cities or suburban areas were more likely to support safety through inclusion (71%) than educators from small cities and non-remote towns (63%) or educators from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (51%). Respondents from remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools were more likely to support safety through regulation of behaviour (35%, compared to 28% of participants from small cities/non-remote towns and 19% cities/suburban areas) or to support safety through some combination of inclusion and security/regulation of behaviour (12%, vs. 6% from small cities/non-remote towns and 7% from cities/suburban areas).



THE SAFEST SCHOOLS WILL BE WHERE ALL STAFF HAS A POSITIVE VIEW OF LGBTQ STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FAMILIES. MANDATORY WORKSHOPS PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF LGBTQ STAFF AND STUDENTS WOULD HELP STAFF SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR BELIEFS ARE.

The presence of policy in schools also seemed to affect educators' conceptions of safety. Participants who worked at schools that already had homophobic harassment policies were somewhat more likely to support safety through inclusion (68%) than those who did not (59%), suggesting that those with policies believed they were helpful and/or effective in promoting student safety. Along the same lines, respondents from schools with homophobic harassment policies were less likely to support safety through regulation (21%) than those from schools without a policy (31%).

Educators who worked in Catholic schools were somewhat less likely to support safety through inclusion (60%) than respondents who worked in secular schools (68%), with Catholic educators more likely to support regulation of behaviour (29%) than secular educators (22%). They were equally likely to support some combination of inclusion and regulation and/or security (7% for both).

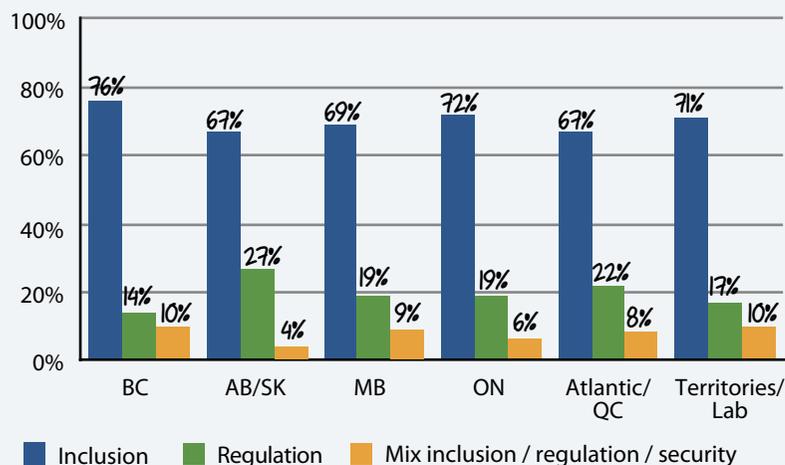
Interestingly, educators who worked in schools in which the main language of instruction was French were less likely to support safety through inclusion (39%) or some combination of inclusion and regulation/security (an additional 3%), and they were far more likely to support safety through regulation of behaviour (52%).

Participants from schools where English was the main language of instruction were most likely to support safety through inclusion (70%, vs. 20% regulation and 8% combination of inclusion and regulation/security). The highest level of support for safety as inclusion was found in bilingual schools, where instruction occurred in both English and French, with 76% of respondents reporting safety as inclusion (compared with 13% regulation and 6% combination inclusion and regulation/security).

Educators reported similar conceptions of safety across the grade levels with approximately two-thirds supporting safety through inclusion (64% early years; 65% middle years; 67% senior years), and one-fourth supporting safety through regulation of behaviour (27% early years; 24% middle years; 23% senior years).

In Figure 20, educators' conceptions of what safety means are displayed regionally. Inclusion is clearly the most widespread conception of safety across the regions, with only a nine-point spread between the regions, from 76% in British Columbia to 67% in Alberta/Saskatchewan and Atlantic provinces/Québec. British Columbia participants were also least likely to link safety to regulation of behaviour (14%), and participants from Alberta/Saskatchewan were the most likely (27%).

**FIGURE 20: CONCEPTIONS OF SAFETY (BY REGION)**



When asked to report how their school's administration understood school safety, however, "inclusion" was not the most common answer. Rather, the majority of educators selected "regulation of behaviour" (48%), followed by "inclusion" (40%) with only 8% selecting "security"; the remaining 3% either specified some other answer (2%) or "don't know" (1%) in response. When we considered the role of educators, we found that teachers were more likely to report their administrations' conception of safety involved regulation (49%) than guidance counsellors (35%) or administrators (30%), and conversely, administrators were more likely (54%) than guidance counsellors (46%) or teachers (40%) to report that school administrators linked safety to inclusion.

The type of school and school culture also affected educators' evaluations of their administrations' understanding of safety. For instance, educators from French language schools were more likely to report regulation as their administrators' understanding of safety (73%) than those from English language schools (47%) and mixed French-English language schools (41%). Conversely, educators from English language schools (42%) and mixed French-English language schools (41%) were more likely to report their administrators' understanding of safety as inclusion than French language schools (24%). In another context, we found that Catholic school educators were less likely to report inclusion (33%) than secular school teachers (42%) for their administrators'

understanding of safety. Respondents from Catholic schools were also slightly more likely to report regulation (53%) and security (11%) than their secular school counterparts (48% and 8% respectively). When we considered the presence of homophobic harassment policies, educators from schools with such policies were more likely to report their administrators' conception of safety as inclusion (49%) than respondents from schools without homophobic harassment policies (30%). Along the same lines, educators were less likely to report their administrators' understanding of safety as regulation of behaviour when their school had a homophobic harassment policy in place (42% vs. 59% without policy). Similarly, transphobic harassment policies functioned much the same way, with educators from schools with transphobic harassment policies being more likely to report their administrators understood safety as inclusion (55% vs. 34% without policies) and less likely to report it as regulation of behaviour (36% vs. 53% without policies).

Finally, early-years educators were more likely to report their school administrators' understanding of safety as inclusion than those in senior years, who were more likely to report their administrator as understanding regulation of behaviour as safety. Almost half (47%) of respondents who worked in early years said their school administrators understood safety as inclusion, followed by those working

in middle years (41%) and senior years (35%). Conversely, more than half (53%) of educators working in senior years reported their administrators understood safety to be regulation of behaviour, compared to 49% of those working in middle years and 44% of those working in early years.

In all, then, most teachers reported that safety requires "inclusion (e.g., through curriculum, school clubs and events, and policy)" and not just the anti-harassment measures encompassed by regulation of behaviour and security measures, but they were more likely to see their administrators as linking safety to regulation. (If the old stereotype of educators seeing delivery of the official curriculum as their only professional responsibility has ever been true, it seems not to be true of the majority of Canadian educators now.)

### **Educators see LGBTQ rights as human rights**

The survey also approached the topic of educators' approval of LGBTQ-inclusive education less directly, by asking for teachers' level of agreement with the statement that "LGBTQ rights are human rights." Nearly all (96%) participants either strongly agreed (90%) or somewhat agreed (6%). While agreement does not tell us whether participants see the right to a safe and respectful education as a human right, or even whether participants approved of

the concept of human rights itself, this is a third indication of educators' openness to LGBTQ inclusion, and is particularly noteworthy given the extensive integration of human rights content generally in the K-12 curriculum across Canada.

### **Educators support same-sex marriage**

Nearly 9 in 10 educators either strongly agreed (82%) or somewhat agreed (6%) with the statement: "I support same-sex marriage." Another 7% were neutral, while only 6% disagreed (5% strongly and 1% somewhat) with same-sex marriage. At first glance, the level of support we found seems to be significantly higher than that found in national opinion polls. For example, a 2010 poll of 1003 respondents found that 61% of Canadians wanted same-sex marriage to remain legal (Angus Reid, 2010). There was, however, a substantial generation gap as 81% of respondents born after 1980 reported that they supported same-sex marriage, compared to 43% who were born before 1946, 53% who were born between 1946 and 1964, and 66% who were born between 1965 and 1979. The same survey asked if same-sex couples should *not* have any kind of legal recognition, and while 13% of Canadians agreed to this statement, only 3% of respondents born after 1980 said yes. In interpreting such a high approval of same-sex marriage in our survey, it is important to keep in mind that nearly a quarter (23%) of educators in our

sample were born before 1980, and less than 1% were born before 1946. As was found in the Angus Reid poll, we found a statistically significant negative relationship between age and support for same-sex marriage in our survey. Disagreement with same-sex marriage ranged from only 2% for respondents under 30 to 7% for participants 50 and over. Further, research has shown that support for same-sex marriage is significantly related to higher education, which given our sample would apply to almost everyone we surveyed. Finally, research has found that individuals with more liberal attitudes are more likely to favour same-sex marriage, and research also shows that teachers are disproportionately more likely to have liberal attitudes than the general population (e.g., Duncan & Kemmelmeier, 2012). When these additional factors are considered, coupled with the fact that there is no comparable data available on educator population, the very high level of support for same-sex marriage found in our sample does seem realistic.

Support for same-sex marriage was particularly high (95%) among educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education, while two-thirds (67%) of those who reported being neutral on LGBTQ-inclusive education supported same-sex marriage. Only 1 in 5 (20%) of those who opposed LGBTQ-inclusive education indicated support for same-sex marriage.

FNMI educators were most likely to support same-sex marriage (91%), followed closely by White educators (89%) and other racialized participants (82%).

Participants who indicated their religious or spiritual beliefs did not influence their decisions about LGBTQ issues were more likely to support same-sex marriage (95%) than those who indicated their religious beliefs influenced their decisions “a little/somewhat” (72%) or “strongly” (76%). Respondents who identified as Catholic were somewhat less likely to personally approve of same-sex marriage than non-Catholics (83% vs. 91%), though over 4 out of 5 did support it. Protestant respondents were also less likely to personally approve of same-sex marriage than non-Protestants (80% vs. 90%).

A particularly interesting result was that, in general, participants’ support for same-sex marriage was linked to the official stance on the issue in their faith community, but far less so in faith communities that did not support same-sex marriage. Thus, 99% of educators from a religion that supported same-sex marriage also personally supported same-sex marriage, but also 87% of those from religions with mixed views and 78% from religions that opposed same-sex marriage. A related finding was that 81% of educators from Catholic schools supported same-sex marriage (compared to 90% from secular schools). Among

participants with no formal religion, 95% personally approved of same-sex marriage.

Regionally, British Columbia showed the highest level of support for same-sex marriage (93%), followed closely by the Atlantic provinces/Québec and the Territories/Labrador (both 90%) and Ontario (88%). Respondents from the Prairies reported the lowest levels of support for same-sex marriage (Manitoba 84%, Alberta/Saskatchewan 78%).

### **Educators support freedom of gender expression**

When we asked for educators’ level of agreement with the statement “Students should be allowed to express their gender any way they like,” only 68% of respondents strongly agreed, followed by 22% who somewhat agreed. LGBTQ participants were more likely to strongly agree (83% and 15% somewhat agreed) than CH educators (65% and 24% somewhat agree). All transgender educators agreed (81% strongly and 19% somewhat) that students should be able to express their gender any way they like, and cisgender women were slightly more likely than cisgender men to strongly agree (69% and 22% somewhat agree for women, vs. 66% and 21% somewhat agree for men). Administrators and other non-teachers were less likely to agree to the statement (63% strongly agree and 23% somewhat agree) than

guidance counsellors (74% strongly agree and 19% somewhat agree) or teachers (68% strongly agree and 22% somewhat agree).

Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were much more likely to strongly agree that students should be allowed to express their gender any way they like (74% strongly agree, 21% somewhat agree). However, while educators who were neutral towards LGBTQ-inclusive education were more likely to support students' freedom of gender expression (68%) than those opposed (57%), educators who were opposed to LGBTQ-inclusive education were more likely to strongly support freedom of gender expression than those who were neutral (44% vs. 34%).

Educators from Catholic schools were less likely to either strongly agree (63%) or somewhat agree (22%) that students should have freedom of gender expression than respondents from secular schools (70% strongly agreed and 22% somewhat agreed). However, when it came to personal religious beliefs, there was little difference between Catholic educators (72% strongly agreed and 17% strongly agreed) and non-Catholic ones (69% strongly agreed and 22% somewhat agreed), though educators who identified with a Protestant tradition were far less likely to strongly agree (49% and 34% somewhat) than non-Protestant educators (73% and 18% somewhat).

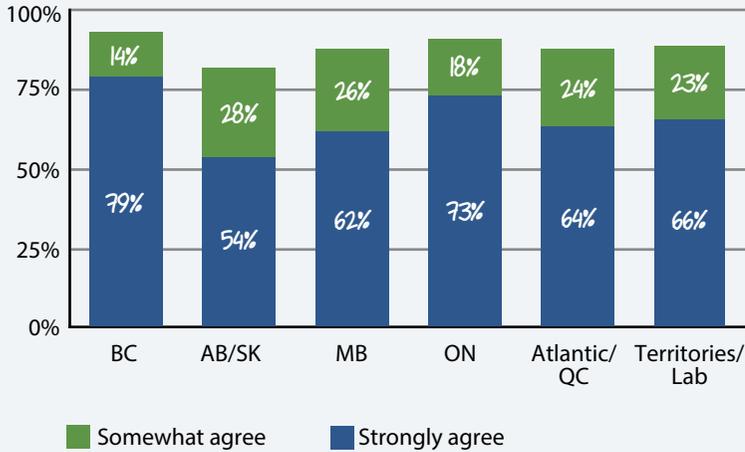
Educators who worked in French language schools were more likely to strongly agree (77% strongly, 19% somewhat agree) than those from English language schools (65% strongly agree and 24% somewhat agree). Educators from mixed language schools reported numbers in the middle for strong agreement (72%) and lower for somewhat (17%).

As shown in Figure 21, educators in British Columbia showed the highest level of support for freedom of gender expression (93%), followed closely by Ontario (91%), the Territories/Labrador (89%), Manitoba and Atlantic provinces/Québec (both 88%), and Alberta/Saskatchewan (82%). From highest to lowest, this demonstrates very minor deviation; but when we considered the strength of agreement with the statement "Students should be allowed to express their gender any way they like," we found much greater discrepancy, with 79% of BC educators strongly supporting students' freedom to express their gender as they like closely followed by 73% of Ontario educators; respondents from Alberta/Saskatchewan were least likely to strongly support freedom of gender expression (54%).

### **It is personally important for educators to address LGBTQ issues**

While almost all educators reported that it was personally important for them to address human rights and social justice (98%),

FIGURE 21: SUPPORT FOR FREEDOM OF GENDER EXPRESSION (BY REGION)



somewhat fewer thought it was important for them to address LGBTQ issues (87%) or issues around gender expression (85%); yet, 97% indicated that it was important for them to address issues of diversity/multiculturalism and 96% reported it was important for them to address gender equity issues. Not surprisingly, almost all (96%) LGBTQ educators reported that it was important for them to address LGBTQ issues, compared with 85% of CH participants. Respondents from racialized groups (92%) were slightly more likely to agree that it was important for them to address LGBTQ issues, compared to White (87%) and FNMI (88%) educators. Educators

from Catholic schools were less likely to agree that it was an important issue for them to address (83%) than participants from secular schools (88%).

Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were substantially more likely to report that it was important for them personally to address LGBTQ issues (94%) than those who were neutral (59%) or those opposed (29%) to LGBTQ-inclusive education.

Educators whose current religion generally approved of same-sex marriage were more likely to indicate that it was important to them to personally address LGBTQ issues

(96%), with somewhat lower (but still very high) numbers of those respondents with no formal religion (91%), those from religions with mixed views toward same-sex marriage (85%), and those from religions opposed to same-sex marriage (82%).

Educators from mixed language English-French schools were most likely to feel it was important to personally address LGBTQ issues (93%), followed by those from English language schools (87%) and French schools (79%).

Respondents from lower grade levels were less likely to consider it personally important to address LGBTQ issues, with 81% of educators who worked in early years reporting that it was personally important to address LGBTQ issues, followed by 86% from middle years and 91% from senior years.

LGBTQ participants were also more likely than CH educators to feel that it was important for them to address issues of gender expression (94% vs. 82% respectively). Over half (56%) of transgender respondents agreed that it was important for them to address issues of gender expression, with the remaining 44% indicating they were neutral on the issues (no transgender participants indicated it was not important). Somewhat more cisgender women than cisgender men thought it was important (87% important, 10% neutral, 2% not important for women vs. 81% important, 14% neutral 5% not important for men). FNMI educators were also more likely to indicate that it was important for them to address issues of gender expression

(90%) than White (85%) and racialized participants (84%). Respondents from secular schools were more likely to report that it is important for them to address this issue (86%) than educators from Catholic schools (79%).

### **COMFORT LEVEL IN DISCUSSING LGBTQ TOPICS WITH STUDENTS**

If educators' practices mirrored their values, nearly all would be actively practicing LGBTQ-inclusive education, which is generally understood not to be the case. To probe the possible reasons for this disparity, we analyzed participants' responses to questions about how comfortable they felt discussing LGBTQ issues with their students. Nearly three-quarters (73%) either strongly agreed (44%) or somewhat agreed (29%) that they were comfortable in such discussions. Another 12% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, with 9% somewhat disagreeing and 6% strongly disagreeing. While the percentage who did feel comfortable was high, it was lower than the percentages reported above for approving of LGBTQ-inclusive education, seeing LGBTQ student safety and respect as their responsibility, and seeing LGBTQ rights as human rights. This opens but does not answer the question, "Why do some teachers who approve of LGBTQ inclusion not feel comfortable practicing it?" After all, almost all (99%) participants agreed "it is important for students to have someone to talk to" (96% strongly agreed and 3% somewhat agreed).

To further explore this question, we analyzed the comfort level reported by variously situated respondents (i.e., those with different professions, personal identities, types of school, and training).

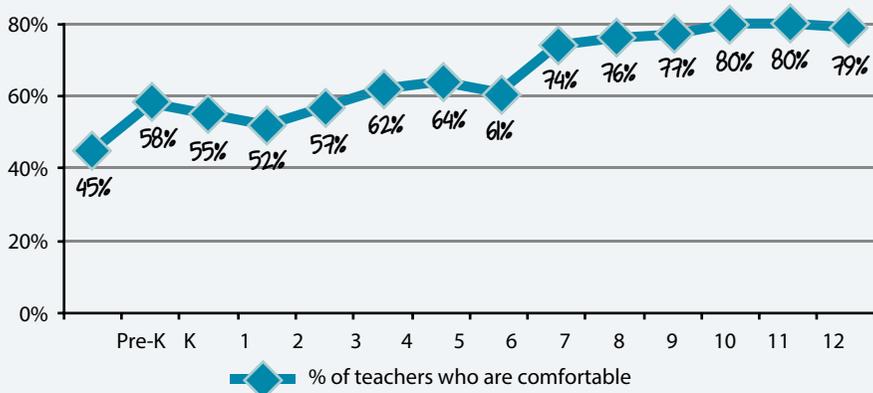
Guidance counsellors were the most likely group to feel comfortable discussing LGBTQ issues with students (92%), followed by administrators and other non-teachers (76%) and then teachers (72%). There was little difference between the likelihood of LGBTQ respondents and CH participants feeling comfortable (75% vs. 73%). Participants from racialized groups were most likely to feel comfortable (79%), followed by White educators (73%); FNMI respondents were much less likely than either White or racialized participants to feel comfortable (54%). (Possible explanations could include the complexity of

discussing LGBTQ topics in communities that may see LGBTQ identities as non-Indigenous and may be more conservative in their religious views due to colonization.)

As shown in Figure 22, participants who were Pre-K to Grade 6 teachers were less likely to feel comfortable discussing LGBTQ issues with their students, than those who taught Grades 7 to 12, which may suggest that some early- and middle-years teachers who support LGBTQ-inclusive education saw it as a senior-years' responsibility. It is also possible that their lower result reflects a disproportionate focus on senior years in professional development opportunities and curriculum resources for LGBTQ-inclusive education.

Educators from Catholic schools were much less likely to feel comfortable discussing LGBTQ issues with their students (57%) than

**FIGURE 22: TEACHERS' COMFORT IN DISCUSSING LGBTQ TOPICS (BY GRADE TAUGHT)**



those from secular schools (76%), even though, as noted earlier, they were almost as likely to approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education (83% vs. 85%). This suggests that their discomfort has more to do with their school context than with their personal values. Educators' personal religious tradition may have bearing on their comfort level, however, as those who currently identified as Catholic were less likely to feel comfortable discussing LGBTQ issues with their students (62%) than those who were non-Catholic (77%).

Participants from larger schools reported higher levels of comfort in discussing LGBTQ issues with students. For instance, 63% of educators in schools with 250 or fewer students reported feeling comfortable, while educators from schools over 1000 students felt the most comfortable (86%), with those from schools of 251 to 500 students (73%) and 501 to 1000 students (74%) reporting little variation.

Community context also plays some part in educators' feelings of comfort as we found participants from schools located in cities or suburban areas more comfortable (76%) than those from small cities and non-remote towns (68%) or remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (66%).

Regionally, educators from the Territories and Labrador showed the highest level of comfort discussing LGBTQ issues with students (80%), followed by British Columbia (77%) and the Atlantic provinces and Québec (76%), Ontario (69%), Manitoba (65%), and

Alberta and Saskatchewan (58%). This 22 point regional range is higher than for many other analyses in this report and could be attributable to differences in professional development. Overall, 86% of educators who were either required to attend training or were invited to attend and did agree that they felt comfortable discussing LGBTQ issues with their students versus 69% of those who did not attend training.

Respondents from schools with specific homophobic harassment policies were somewhat more likely to feel comfortable (76%) than those from schools without such policies (71%). The difference is slightly larger for participants from schools with transphobic harassment policies (79% vs. 71%). Moreover, participants from schools with homophobic harassment policies who felt that they had been sufficiently or very well trained in the policies were the most likely to report being comfortable discussing LGBTQ issues with their students (79%), followed by 75% who believed they were somewhat trained but would have liked more, and 70% who were not trained or not trained sufficiently.

## SUBJECT AREAS WHERE LGBTQ CONTENT APPLIES

One of the challenges faced by LGBTQ-inclusive educators is that, historically, LGBTQ content has often been considered to be relevant only in sex education classes with senior students, and then only in the context of preventing HIV infection. As one indicator of educators' perception of the purposes and scope of LGBTQ-inclusive education, we asked participants in which content areas they felt LGBTQ content applied. Significantly, only 2% of educators replied "none," though an equally slight 4% reported that it should be taught in all subject areas. Most commonly, educators reported that LGBTQ content was relevant to "health/family studies/human ecology" (86%), followed by "social studies (women's studies/civics)" (79%), "English/language arts" (78%), "social justice/law" (78%), "history" (63%), "religion" (59%), "visual and performing arts/music" (57%), French language arts (53%), "science" (46%), physical education (46%), and finally math (22%).

Catholic school educators were more likely to report "none" (4%) than educators working in secular schools (1%). Respondents working in Catholic schools were also more likely to report that LGBTQ content should be included in religion classes (79%), compared with 56% of those in secular schools. As well, Catholic school educators were only slightly less likely to report that LGBTQ content should be included in health/family studies/human ecology classes (80%) than those teaching in secular schools (87%).

## PRACTICING LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

This section turns from participants' *values* and *comfort level* with respect to LGBTQ-inclusive education to participants' *practices*.

### School-level efforts

Only 37% of educators reported participating in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts at their school. Guidance counsellors were most likely to have participated in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts (80%), followed by administrators and other non-teachers (46%) and teachers (35%). Educators from Catholic schools were substantially less likely to have participated in any LGBTQ-inclusive efforts at their schools (19%) than respondents from secular schools (41%). Respondents from schools with specific homophobic harassment policies were also more likely to have participated in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts (43%) than those from schools without such policies (35%). Over half (54%) of LGBTQ educators reported participating in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts at their schools, compared to one-third of CH participants (33%). Over half (55%) of transgender respondents had participated in inclusive efforts, while 44% of cisgender men and 35% of cisgender women participated. Educators from racialized groups were also more likely to have participated in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts at their schools (46%) than White (37%) or FNMI (22%) respondents. There were substantial regional differences as well. Educators from Ontario and British

Columbia reported the highest levels of participation in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts (45% and 44% respectively), followed by the Atlantic provinces/Québec (37%), Manitoba (29%), the Territories/Labrador (20%), and Alberta/Saskatchewan (15%).

Educators from city or suburban area schools were far more likely to have participated in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts at their schools (46%) than those from small cities and non-remote towns (29%) or remote/rural/reserve/AFB schools (15%). Similarly, educators from larger schools were more likely to have participated in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts, with participants working at schools with over 1000 students reporting the highest participation (57%) followed by those from schools with 751 to 1000 students (54%), those from 501 to 750 student schools (44%), those from 251 to 500 student schools (27%), and finally those from 250 or fewer students (17%).

Similarly, the grade level at which educators worked affected the likelihood of their having participated in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts in their schools, with senior-years educators most likely to report participating in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts (47%) and middle-years (31%) and early-years (22%) educators decreasingly likely.

Participants working in English language schools were most likely to have participated in LGBTQ-inclusive efforts in their schools (40%), followed by educators from mixed language French-English schools (37%) and those from French language schools (23%).

## Classroom practices

Teachers were asked in what specific ways they had included LGBTQ content in their curriculum. Over three-quarters of teachers (78%) reported they had included LGBTQ content some way (ranging from a once-only reference to multiple methods and occasions). Over half (53%) answered that they had challenged homophobia, which could range from a quick response to a student who said “that’s so gay” in class, on the one hand, to undertaking a unit on homophobia, on the other. Similarly, 49% reported using inclusive language and examples, which could mean using gender-neutral terms such as “parents” rather than “mom and dad” or using more explicitly LGBTQ-inclusive examples such as “two moms.” Other frequent ways in which teachers included LGBTQ content in their curriculum include: addressing topics in sexual health, family, and healthy relationship units (44%); including LGBTQ rights when talking about human rights (38%); critiquing gender conformity (28%); challenging transphobia (19%); including information about LGBTQ historical figures (18%); and including LGBTQ-themed stories/fiction (18%). Although the numbers were not as high, two-thirds (68%) of early-years teachers reported including LGBTQ issues in their curriculum (vs. 84% in senior years); the most common practice was addressing topics in sexual health, family, and healthy relationships (44% vs. 49%), followed by using inclusive language and examples (40% vs. 57%), challenging homophobia (40% vs. 66%),

and including LGBTQ rights when talking about human rights (32% vs. 44%).

**IN THE BEGINNING, WHEN I FIRST BROACHED THE SUBJECT WITH STUDENTS, THEY WERE RELUCTANT TO TALK ABOUT DIFFERENCES. BUT THEY ARE ALL OKAY WITH IT NOW AND OFTEN ASK TO TALK ABOUT SUBJECTS THAT HELP THEM TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE'S DIFFERENCES.**

Interestingly, educators from Catholic schools reported LGBTQ-inclusive practices at slightly lower levels than in secular schools. For instance, 63% of educators from Catholic schools reported having included LGBTQ content in their courses in some way, compared to 80% from secular schools. Among the given options, Catholic educators most commonly challenged homophobia (45% vs. 58% secular), used inclusive language and examples (37% vs. 54%), addressed LGBTQ topics in sexual health, family, and healthy relationships (32% vs. 48%), and included LGBTQ rights when talking about human rights (28% vs. 42%).

When it came to including LGBTQ content in their teaching in some way, we found generally high levels reported in Québec (87%), Nova Scotia (87%), BC (84%), Ontario (81%), Yukon (80%), and Nunavut (79%) with lower levels in Northwest Territories (71%), Newfoundland

and Labrador (66%), Saskatchewan (67%), and Manitoba (65%), and lowest in Alberta (59%) and PEI (49%). Specific classroom practices involved (participants were asked to “check all that apply”):

- ⇒ using inclusive language and examples (Nova Scotia 63%; BC 62%; Ontario 59%; Nunavut 54%; Québec 46%; Yukon 42%; PEI 41%; Northwest Territories 40%; Manitoba 39%; New Brunswick 38%; Newfoundland and Labrador 35%; Saskatchewan 35%; Alberta 31%),
- ⇒ addressing LGBTQ topics in sexual health, family, and healthy relationships areas (Yukon 63%; Nova Scotia 61%; Québec 51%; Nunavut 50%; BC 49%; Northwest Territories 49%; Ontario 47%; Newfoundland and Labrador 41%; Saskatchewan 35%; Manitoba 34%; New Brunswick 33%; PEI 31%; Alberta 31%),
- ⇒ including LGBTQ rights when talking about human rights (Ontario 47%; BC 43%; Nova Scotia 43%; Québec 39%; Nunavut 35%; Yukon 32%; Newfoundland and Labrador 31%; Manitoba 29%; Saskatchewan 29%; PEI 28%; Northwest Territories 26%; Alberta 23%; New Brunswick 21%),
- ⇒ challenging homophobia in their classrooms (Québec 63%; BC 62%; Ontario 59%; Nova Scotia 57%; Nunavut 50%; Northwest Territories 49%; Saskatchewan 39%; Yukon 37%; Alberta 37%; Manitoba 36%; New Brunswick 32%;

Newfoundland and Labrador 32%; PEI 28%), and

- ⇒ critiquing gender conformity (Nunavut 39%; BC 37%; Ontario 37%; Nova Scotia 32%; Northwest Territories 23%; PEI 23%; Québec 22%; Yukon 20%; Manitoba 18%; Newfoundland and Labrador 18%; Alberta 17%; New Brunswick 14%; Saskatchewan 6%).

This difference suggests that specific provision for LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum is needed from provincial education ministries. Three provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario) now have legislation requiring schools to provide Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) when requested by students. The situation in Alberta, however, is quite interesting. From September 1, 2010 through March 18, 2015, teachers in Alberta were prohibited under section 11.1 of the *Alberta Human Rights Act* from dealing with sexuality or religion in the classroom without prior parental notification. This would be expected to have significantly negatively impacted the likelihood of finding LGBTQ-inclusive classroom practices in that province. This proscription has now been eliminated from human rights legislation as of March 2015, but it moved into the province's *Education Act* by effect of Bill 10. The impact of this requirement to continue to inhibit the possibility of Alberta classrooms being inclusive spaces for LGBTQ students—made even more noteworthy by the fact that the *Education Act*, also by effect of Bill 10, now requires schools in Alberta to provide

GSAs when requested by students—is certainly worthy of further study.

There was little difference between urban and rural context for educators including LGBTQ content in the curriculum (80% in city/suburban area, 73% in small city/non-remote town, 75% in remote/rural/reserve/AFB).

### Restrictions on LGBTQ-related content in the classroom

When we asked about whether there were any restrictions on LGBTQ-related content in the classroom, 20% of respondents did not know; of those who did know, 14% said there were restrictions on what content could be addressed in the classroom and 86% said there were no restrictions on LGBTQ-related content. Regionally, we found that educators in British Columbia and the Atlantic provinces/Québec were the most likely to report there were no restrictions on LGBTQ-related content in the classroom (both 96%), followed closely by respondents in the Territories/Labrador (93%). Over 4 out of 5 (81%) educators in Manitoba and Ontario reported there were no restrictions on LGBTQ-content. Even though human rights legislation was in effect at the time of the survey requiring teachers to notify parents if teachers intended to discuss sexuality in their classes, 54% of Alberta educators reported that there were no restrictions. There was a dramatic difference between responses of Catholic school educators and secular school educators, with 58% of Catholic school respondents reporting there were restrictions on LGBTQ-related content in the classroom and only

7% of those from secular schools. Grade level also affected educators' likelihood of responding affirmatively for this question, with 20% of respondents from early years reporting there were restrictions, 15% of participants from middle years, and 10% of those from senior years.

Educators' personal identities and views contributed to their answers to this question as well, suggesting that responses may have just as much to do with perception of what was informally restricted in the classroom as with what was formally restricted. For instance, respondents who identified as LGBTQ were slightly more likely to answer yes to this question (18%) than CH respondents (12%). Educators who opposed LGBTQ-inclusive education were twice as likely to report restrictions on LGBTQ-related content in the classroom than those who approved (27% of those who opposed said yes, 24% neutral said yes, and only 13% of those who approved said yes). Similarly, educators who identified with a religion that opposed same-sex marriage were much more likely to answer yes (23%) than those who identified with a religion that had mixed views on same-sex marriage (12%) or those whose religion approved (8%). Further, educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies were less likely to answer that there were restrictions on LGBTQ-related content in the classroom (12% vs. 19% of those from schools without such policies); there was even more of a gap between educators from schools with transphobic harassment policies and those from schools without (10% with transphobic harassment policies vs. 21% without).

Overall, however, we are left with the perhaps surprising result that most educators across the country believed there were no formal restrictions on LGBTQ-related content in the classroom, which raises the question, What is it, then, that is holding teachers back from integrating such content more thoroughly? In the next section, we examine internal and external barriers to LGBTQ-inclusive education.

## SUPPORTS AND BARRIERS

We now turn to participants' perceptions of supports and barriers to practicing LGBTQ-inclusive education: what helps educators to practice LGBTQ-inclusive education, and makes it more likely that they will? What holds them back?

### INTERNAL FACTORS

#### Teacher efficacy

The literature on personal efficacy tells us that people are more likely to undertake challenging work if they believe they can do it successfully. As one indicator of participants' sense of personal efficacy in connection with LGBTQ inclusion, we asked them to indicate their agreement with the statement, "I can respond effectively when anti-LGBTQ incidents take place in my school." Over three-quarters (76%) of educators agreed (36% strongly agreed and 40% somewhat agreed), followed by 17% who were neutral, 5% who somewhat disagreed, and 2% who strongly

disagreed. Not surprisingly, substantially more LGBTQ educators agreed with the statement (88% vs. 73% of CH participants). Over 4 in 5 (88%) transgender respondents, 77% of cisgender men and 75% of cisgender women agreed. White educators (76%) were more likely to agree than racialized (69%) or FNMI educators (69%). Teachers were the least likely to agree (74%), and guidance counsellors the most likely (93%), followed by administrators and other non-teachers (87%). Not surprisingly, given the volatility of the issue of LGBTQ-inclusive education in the Roman Catholic school system, educators from Roman Catholic schools were somewhat less likely to agree (64%) than those from secular schools (78%). Participants from schools with homophobic harassment policies were also more likely to agree (81%) than educators from schools without such policies (70%).

The highest levels of agreement that they could respond effectively to anti-LGBTQ incidents was found among those educators from schools with homophobic and transphobic harassment policies, especially among those educators who felt very well trained on the policy. For instance, 94% of educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies who felt well trained on the policy reported that they could respond effectively to anti-LGBTQ incidents, compared to 81% who felt adequately prepared, 76% who felt prepared but would have liked more training, and 72% who either were not trained or felt that they had not received enough training. Similar results were found for respondents from schools with

transphobic harassment policies as 86% believed that they could respond effectively, compared to 72% of educators from schools without such policies. When probed further on training, 96% of participants from schools with transphobic harassment policies who felt very well prepared agreed that they could respond effectively when anti-LGBTQ incidents took place, compared to 86% who felt adequately trained, 82% who would have liked more training, and 79% who either were not trained or did not feel that they were trained sufficiently.

Participants who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were slightly more likely to agree that they could respond effectively to anti-LGBTQ incidents (78%), though 72% of educators who opposed also agreed. The lowest level of agreement came from educators who were neutral toward LGBTQ-inclusive education (60%).

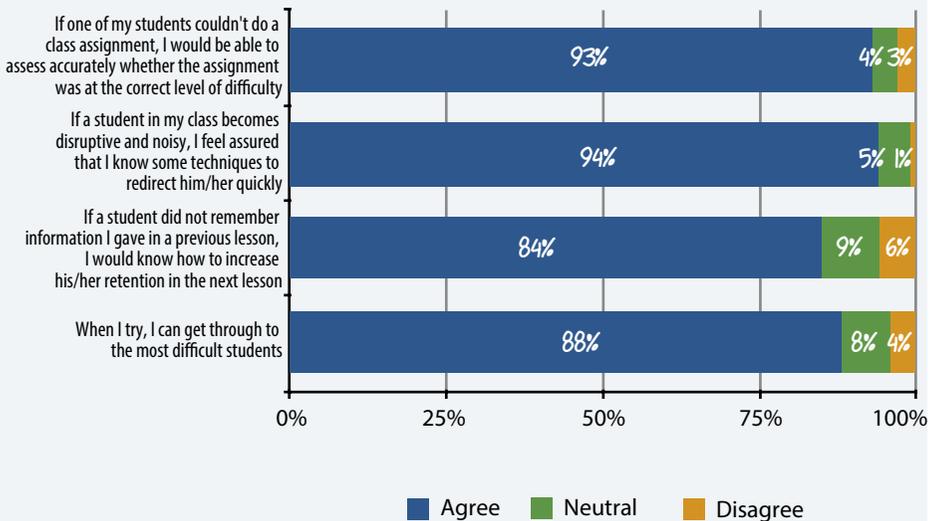
Educators whose religion generally approved of same-sex marriage were most likely to agree that they could respond effectively to anti-LGBTQ incidents at their schools (90%), while those from religions with mixed views were much less likely to agree (73%) and those whose religions were generally opposed were the least likely to agree (68%). Educators with no formal religion (80%) were more likely to agree than those whose religion had a mixed or oppositional view, but less likely than those whose religion approved of same-sex marriage.

Catholic respondents were somewhat less likely to agree (69%) than non-Catholics (79%). Protestants were only slightly less likely to agree (73%) than non-Protestants (77%).

### Teacher efficacy scale

In the long version of the survey, we used a reduced version of the Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) Teacher Efficacy Scale, which is based on educators' level of agreement with a series of statements (originally, agreement was measured on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree). As shown in Figure 23, participants reported high levels of confidence in their efficacy as educators.

FIGURE 23: TEACHER EFFICACY SCALE



Additionally, there was no difference on the teaching efficacy scale between LGBTQ and CH teachers, nor were there any significant differences based on gender identity (cisgender women vs. cisgender men vs. transgender), suggesting that any marginalization LGBTQ teachers have experienced related to their sexual or gender identity has not had an impact on their sense of personal efficacy as teachers.

Racialized teachers scored significantly lower on the teacher efficacy scale than FNMI or White teachers (a half of a standard deviation unit (-.49) lower than the mean of zero, compared to White participants (mean=+.02) and FNMI respondents (mean=+.39))<sup>2</sup>.

Teachers from schools with homophobic harassment policies scored higher on the teacher efficacy scale (mean=+.20) than respondents from schools without such policies (mean=-.21), which was a significant difference. Although the margin was not as wide, a similar significant result was found for teachers who worked in schools that have transphobic harassment policies (mean=+.20) compared with participants who worked in schools without such policies (mean=-.16).

### Personal attributes affecting effectiveness

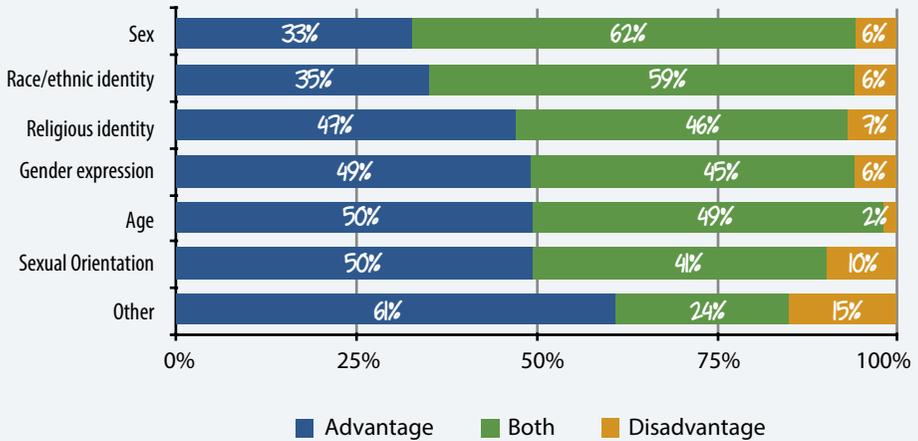
We asked participants to identify which of their personal attributes had an impact on their effectiveness as an educator and whether each attribute was an advantage, a disadvantage, or both. As shown in Figure 24, educators reported on attributes such as sex, race/ethnic identity, religious identity, gender expression, age, and sexual orientation. Respondents were most likely to report that their sexual identity (50%), age (also 50%), gender expression (49%), and religious identity (47%) were advantageous. However, across the categories, educators reported significant ambivalence about the benefit of each attribute. For instance, the highest levels

of ambivalence, with over half of respondents reporting an attribute was both an advantage and a disadvantage, were expressed for an educator's sex (62%) and race/ethnic identity (59%). Overall, educators were generally unlikely to rate particular attributes as solely disadvantageous in the classroom, which suggests, along with the high numbers of educators reporting ambivalence, that educators recognize that personal attributes were not by default positive or negative, but could be relevant, irrelevant or have different effects in different schools.

"Other" disadvantages specified by participants included factors such as physical appearance, cultural background, lack of training, and difficulties with their administration. "Other" advantages specified by teachers included personality traits (e.g., sense of humour, disposition, patience, intelligence), attitudes (e.g., respect for students, compassion/empathy, open-mindedness, outgoingness), factors related to their job (e.g., ongoing PD or education, involvement in extracurricular activities, experience/expertise), as well as attributes of parenthood and community connection.

<sup>2</sup> Standard deviation is a statistical measure that is used to quantify the variation or dispersion within a set of data. Briefly, a negative number indicates a lower than average result and a positive number indicates above average (0 is average and the scale generally goes from +/-3 standard deviation).

**FIGURE 24: ATTRIBUTES AFFECTING EFFECTIVENESS AS AN EDUCATOR**



LGBTQ educators were less likely to feel that their gender expression was an advantage to their effectiveness (42%) than CH participants (57%). Cisgender men were more likely than cisgender women to believe that their gender expression was an advantage (57% vs. 46%). Cisgender men were also more likely than cisgender women to feel that their sex was an advantage in their effectiveness as an educator (53% vs. 24%).

Not surprisingly, LGBTQ educators were more likely to maintain that their sexual orientation was a disadvantage (18%) than CH participants (1%). Similarly, they were less likely to view their sexual orientation as an advantage (35%) than CH respondents

(66%), whose higher likelihood may reflect an awareness that heterosexual identity could shield them from accusations of “recruiting” or only caring because of their own sexual orientation when addressing LGBTQ issues. Transgender educators were more likely to view their sexual orientation as a disadvantage (32%), compared to cisgender men (12%) and cisgender women (7%). (Forty-three percent of transgender respondents also reported that their gender expression was a disadvantage.)

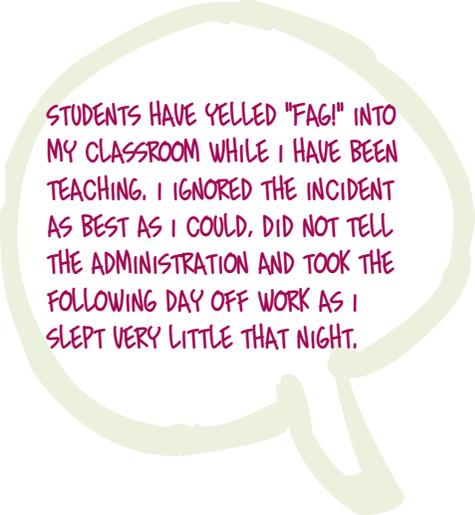
Younger respondents (under 30 years of age) were less likely to feel that their age was an advantage (28%), though, interestingly, educators between the ages of 40 and 49 were the most likely to report that their

age was an advantage (66%). Half (50%) of participants aged 50 and over felt that their age was an advantage, while 44% of respondents between 30 and 39 years old thought so.

Educators from a racialized group were less likely to view their race or ethnic identity as an advantage (14%), compared to FNMI respondents (30%) and White participants (38%). Additionally, participants from a racialized identity were also less likely to view their religious identity as an advantage, compared to 42% of FNMI respondents and 47% of White educators.

### Inhibiting factors

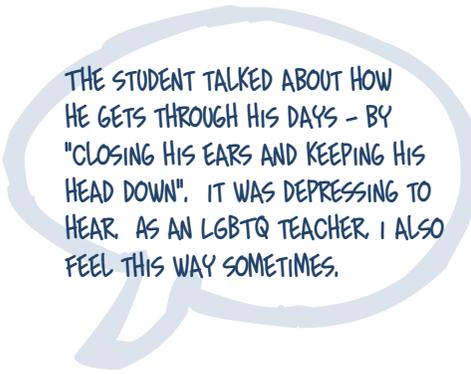
We asked educators what factors, if any, would prevent them from addressing LGBTQ issues. A third (31%) said no factors prevented them and a fifth (19%) said it was not an issue at their school. One-third (33%) gave lack of training (19%) and/or insufficient information on effective strategies and resources (29%) as barriers to addressing LGBTQ issues. Nearly a third (31%) gave student-based reasons, such as “my students are too young” (20%), “I don’t want to embarrass LGBTQ students (10%), and/or “I might be harassed by students (4%). Participants from schools that had early-years grades (Pre-K to Grade 4) were more likely to feel that their students were too young (38% vs. 11% of educators from any school that included higher grades). Almost a quarter (23%) gave fear-based reasons from outside their



STUDENTS HAVE YELLED "FAG!" INTO MY CLASSROOM WHILE I HAVE BEEN TEACHING. I IGNORED THE INCIDENT AS BEST AS I COULD. DID NOT TELL THE ADMINISTRATION AND TOOK THE FOLLOWING DAY OFF WORK AS I SLEPT VERY LITTLE THAT NIGHT.

school environment. These included: “parents would be opposed” (16%), “I am concerned about legal implications” (8%), and/or “religious groups would be opposed” (6%). Some educators (14%) gave fear-based reasons stemming from within their school environments, such as “my school administration would be opposed” (6%), “my school trustees are opposed” (4%), “my colleagues would be opposed” (4%), “I don’t have a permanent contract” (4%), and/or “I might be turned down for a promotion” (2%). Finally, only 12% gave belief-based reasons, such as “it’s a private matter” (8%), “I have more important things to worry about” (3%), “I don’t think it is a part of my job” (3%), and/or “homosexuality is contrary to my religious convictions” (2%).

Educators from Catholic schools were somewhat more likely to give a belief-based reason (17% vs. 11% for participants from secular schools), such as “homosexuality is contrary to my religious convictions” (5% vs. 1%). Catholic school educators were also much more likely to report that religious groups would be opposed (21% vs. 3%), parents would be opposed (24% vs. 15%), their school trustees would be opposed (17% vs. 2%), their school division would be opposed (16% vs. 2%), and/or their school administration would be opposed (15% vs. 5%). Finally, participants from Catholic schools were much more likely to give insufficient training (29%) as something that prevented them from addressing LGBTQ issues, compared to 17% of educators from secular schools.



THE STUDENT TALKED ABOUT HOW HE GETS THROUGH HIS DAYS - BY "CLOSING HIS EARS AND KEEPING HIS HEAD DOWN". IT WAS DEPRESSING TO HEAR AS AN LGBTQ TEACHER, I ALSO FEEL THIS WAY SOMETIMES.

LGBTQ educators were more likely to cite not having a permanent contract as a factor preventing them from addressing LGBTQ

issues at their school (11% vs. 2% for CH participants). Similarly, they were more likely to be concerned that they might be turned down for promotion (6% vs. 1%). LGBTQ participants were also more likely to be concerned that they “might be harassed by students” (16% vs. <1%) and/or that “people might think I was LGBTQ” (5% vs. <1%). LGBTQ educators were also significantly more concerned about opposition from a variety of groups, including parents (25% vs. 14%) and school administration (9% vs. 5%). They were also slightly more likely to be concerned about legal implications (12% vs. 7%). Conversely, CH respondents were more likely to give insufficient training as a reason (21% vs. 13% for LGBTQ participants) and/or needing more information about effective strategies and resources (31% vs. 19%). They were also more likely to report that they did not want to embarrass LGBTQ students (12% vs. 6%) as a reason for not addressing LGBTQ issues.

Educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies were more likely to report that there was “nothing” preventing them from addressing LGBTQ issues (36% vs. 22% for participants from schools without homophobic harassment policies). They were also less likely to fear opposition from parents (15% vs. 21%), their school administration (5% vs. 10%), religious groups (4% vs. 9%), their school division (3% vs. 7%), their school trustees (3% vs. 7%), and/or colleagues (2% vs. 7%). They were, however, somewhat more likely to report that LGBTQ issues were a private matter (10% vs. 5%).

## Mental health of educators

In order to allow us to assess the general well-being of educators with respect to LGBTQ identity and LGBTQ-inclusive education, we included a series of 14 questions from the Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) (Keyes, 2002). One of the benefits of using the MHC-SF is that respondents can be categorized into three groups of positive mental health: those who are flourishing, those who are languishing, or those who have moderate mental health. Flourishing individuals possess both affective/hedonistic aspects (i.e., emotional well-being) and functional/eudemonic aspects (i.e., psychological and social well-being) of mental health. Put another way, they feel good about themselves and they function well in life. By contrast, languishing individuals have an absence of meaning, an absence of purpose, and/or an absence of positive life elements. Finally, individuals with moderate mental health are somewhere in-between (i.e., they are neither flourishing nor languishing in life) (Peter, Roberts, & Dengate, 2011).

Overall, nearly three-quarters (74%) of our participants were classified by this scale as flourishing in life, while 22% were moderately mentally healthy, and only 4% were languishing. These results parallel national data from the 2012 Canadian Community

Health Survey-Mental Health (CCHS-MH) where 77% of Canadians were classified as flourishing, 22% had moderate mental health, and 2% were languishing (Gilmour, 2014).

However, LGBTQ educators were somewhat less likely to be flourishing than CH participants (67% vs. 78%). Transgender educators were only slightly less likely to be flourishing than cisgender men (65% and 68% respectively), while both groups were less likely to be flourishing than cisgender women (77%).

Educators who reported that they had been harassed as a minor were less likely to be flourishing (69%) than participants who indicated that they had not experienced any incidents of bullying (83%). Moreover, respondents who were bullied and reported that it had a severe impact on them that still distressed them were far less likely to be flourishing (41%), than were participants who reported that the bullying had a minimal impact (65%), a moderate impact (73%), or a severe impact but that they were over it now (77%). Similarly, respondents who were bullied and had not received support from their teachers (i.e., they did nothing or blamed them) or that their teachers had been their harassers were less likely to be flourishing (66%) than those who had received moderate or strong support from a teacher or other school staff (76%).

We found several protective structural factors for mental health. Educators who worked in schools with homophobic harassment policies were more likely to be flourishing (78%) than those working in environments without such policies (69%). A similar difference was found for respondents who worked in schools with transphobic harassment policies (81% vs. 72%). Educators who worked in schools that had a GSA were also more likely to be flourishing (82%) than respondents who worked in schools without GSAs (70%). These results were even more pronounced for educators who worked with senior-years students. For instance, 82% of senior-years educators who worked in schools with a GSA were flourishing, compared to 59% of senior-years educators who worked in schools without a GSA.

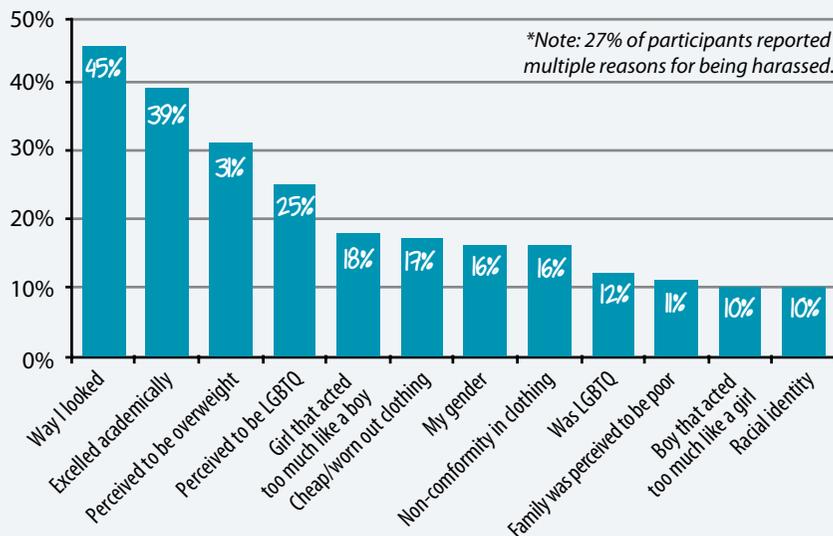
### **Childhood experiences with bullying**

When we asked about educators' own experiences with bullying and harassment as K-12 students, over two-thirds (68%) reported that they themselves had been bullied or harassed. LGBTQ participants were more likely than CH ones to report being bullied (77% vs. 65%). Cisgender men were more likely to report that they had been bullied as a minor (83%) than transgender respondents (74%) or cisgender women (63%). FNMI participants

were more likely to report having been bullied (80%) than White (69%) or racialized educators (54%). Two-thirds (66%) of these racialized respondents reported being harassed due to their ethnicity or race, but only 18% of FNMI respondents said this was the reason for their victimization.

For those respondents who disclosed they had been targeted as minors, we asked for possible reasons why they were bullied or harassed. Over a quarter (27%) of respondents gave multiple reasons, while 9% reported that they were not sure why they were targeted. As shown in Figure 25, the most common reasons respondents reported having been targeted were for the way they looked (45%), their academic success (39%), being perceived to be overweight (31%), and being perceived to be LGBTQ (25%). Notably, over twice as many participants reported being harassed for being perceived to be LGBTQ than for being LGBTQ (25% vs. 12%). Though not shown in the figure, participants also selected or specified other reasons for being targeted, including gender non-conformity in clothing (8%), poor academic performance (7%), being perceived to be underweight (7%), their religion (4%), sports hazing or initiation practices (4%), family perceived to be wealthy (3%), a disability (3%), or some other reason (2%).

**FIGURE 25: REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS WERE HARASSED AS MINORS\***



When asked about the type of harassment they experienced, nearly a third (30%) of respondents who were bullied gave multiple answers about how they were bullied. Almost all (96%) reported having been verbally harassed. Over half (53%) reported having experienced social exclusion, 44% having been victims of rumours or lies, 37% having experienced physical harassment, and 15% having had property damaged or stolen. One in ten (11%) had experienced sexual harassment and 5% had been sexually humiliated (such as wedgies, mockery, etc.). LGBTQ participants were more likely than CH participants to report having experienced physical harassment (47% vs. 31%), having

been the subject of rumours or lies (52% vs. 40%), having had property damaged or stolen (20% vs. 12%), and having been the victim of sexual humiliation (7% vs. 3%).

Cisgender men were the most likely to report having experienced physical harassment (56%) as minors, followed by transgender participants (42%) and cisgender women (26%). However, cisgender women were more likely to report having been sexually harassed (14%) than cisgender men (4%). Transgender participants were more likely to report having experienced social exclusion (84%) than cisgender women (58%) or cisgender men (41%). Transgender educators

were also more likely to have had rumours or lies spread about them (85%) than cisgender men (43%) or cisgender women (43%).

FNMI respondents were more likely to report experiencing both sexual harassment (22%) and sexual humiliation (13%) than White (10% and 4% respectively) and racialized participants (11% and 4% respectively). FNMI participants were also more likely to have been socially excluded (72%) than White (53%) or racialized (42%) participants, though racialized respondents were more likely to be the subject of rumours or lies (75%) than FNMI (56%) or White (42%) participants.

While all experiences of bullying and harassment have the potential to leave a lasting impact, we asked respondents to rate the severity of their experiences. Nearly a quarter (24%) reported that the victimization they experienced had a minimal impact on them, while 38% indicated that their experiences had a moderate impact on them. Over a quarter (28%) reported that it had a severe impact on them at the time, but that they were now unaffected by it. One in ten (10%) participants, however, reported that the victimization had a severe impact on them, to the extent that it still causes distress. LGBTQ respondents were more likely to report this (15%) than CH participants (7%).

When we consider the type of victimization experienced, we found that respondents who reported experiencing

sexual humiliation (28%), sexual harassment (22%), physical bullying (18%), and property damaged/stolen (25%) were the most likely to report that these experiences had such a severe impact on them that it still distressed them. While there was little difference between the severity of impact LGBTQ and CH respondents reported having experienced through sexual humiliation (26% vs. 23%, respectively), LGBTQ participants who had experienced sexual harassment were more likely to report that it still caused distress today (36% vs. 10% CH respondents). Compared to CH participants, LGBTQ respondents also reported that the harassment had a severe impact that still distressed them when the bullying involved incidents of graffiti (7% CH vs. 38% LGBTQ), property damaged or property being stolen (18% CH vs. 32% LGBTQ), social exclusion (11% CH vs. 23% LGBTQ), physical harassment (15% CH vs. 21% LGBTQ), or verbal harassment (7% CH vs. 16% LGBTQ).

Further, we asked participants who experienced victimization as a minor how they would describe the support they received from teachers or school staff. Almost three-quarters (74%) replied that they had not received any support, mostly because teachers or school staff had not been aware of the behaviours (48%); however, 18% of respondents reported that teachers or school staff were aware of the bullying, but did not help or support them, 4% indicated that teachers or school staff were their harassers,

and 3% said that teachers or school staff were aware but blamed the student. One-quarter (26%) of respondents indicated that they received support from their teacher or school staff (16% reported minimal support, 3% moderate, 3% strong but ineffective, and 3% strong and effective support). LGBTQ participants were more likely than CH participants to report that teachers or school staff had not supported them, had been their harassers, or had blamed them for their own victimization (38% vs. 18%).

Not surprisingly, respondents who reported not having been supported by teachers or school staff were more likely to indicate that the bullying still had a distressing impact on them (27%), compared to participants who said that their teachers had not known about the situation (5%), that they had offered minimal support (5%), or that they had been very supportive regardless of whether the intervention was effective or not (2%). This speaks to the lasting impact of bullying and harassment when educators do not support students.

For respondents who reported that their teacher or other school staff had not supported them, had been their harassers, or had blamed them for their own harassment, we compared the type of harassment with its impact. When participants received no support from teachers or school staff, LGBTQ respondents were particularly affected and reported still being distressed by the incident

when the bullying involved sexual harassment (62% vs. 39% for CH participants) or sexual humiliation (45% vs. 14% for CH participants). However, CH respondents were more likely to experience current distress from incidents involving physical harassment (41% vs. 27% for LGBTQ respondents) and having rumours or lies spread about them (35% vs. 24% for LGBTQ) when no teacher or staff member had offered support to them, had been their harassers, or had blamed them.

We asked respondents who their bullies or harassers had been, to which 30% gave multiple answers. Four out of five (80%) respondents reported that their harassers were male students, and two-thirds (67%) indicated that female students had been their bullies. Nearly a third (30%) reported that their bullies had been older students, while 4% said younger. Nearly 1 in 10 (9%) reported that family members or other relatives had been their bullies, and 13% indicated that they had been targeted by school staff. LGBTQ participants were more likely than CH respondents to report having been victimized by male students (85% vs. 78% CH respondents), older students (43% vs. 22%), and by family members or other relatives (14% vs. 6%). CH participants, however, were more likely than LGBTQ participants to report having been victimized by female students (71% vs. 60%). Not surprisingly, given that much bullying and harassment happens in gender-segregated places such as change

rooms and washrooms, cisgender men were more likely to report that their bullies had been male students (94% vs. 85% for transgender participants and 72% for cisgender women), while cisgender women were more likely to indicate that female students had been their bullies (85% vs. 52% for transgender participants and 33% for cisgender men).

Finally, when we asked if, as a minor, they had ever initiated or participated in bullying/harassing other students because they were LGBTQ or were perceived to be LGBTQ, 10% of participants admitted harassing or bullying others (1% initiated and 9% participated when another initiated). Cisgender men who had bullied were more likely than cisgender women who had bullied to report having bullied another student for being LGBTQ or being perceived to be LGBTQ (21% vs. 5%). LGBTQ respondents who had bullied were more likely than their CH counterparts to have done so (14% vs. 8%), with 30% of transgender respondents who had bullied reporting having participated in this type of bullying. The increased numbers for LGBTQ participants and cisgender men may be read as efforts to establish their own CH credentials, as signs of personal discomfort with their own identity at that point in their lives, or as a sign of greater willingness to admit to participating in these behaviours. Further, FNMI participants were more likely to report engaging in bullying fellow classmates because they were or were perceived to be LGBTQ (17%) than White respondents (9%) or racialized participants (7%).

Respondents who reported having been victimized themselves as minors were more likely to initiate or participate in bullying and harassment (13% vs. 4%), which is consistent with previous research (e.g., Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001). This number is even higher for respondents who reported being bullied because they were perceived to be LGBTQ (19%).

### **Educators in Catholic schools**

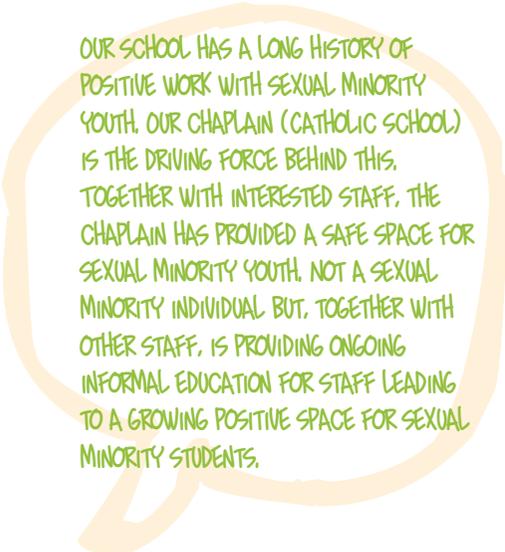
Because religious faith is often represented as a moral barrier to LGBTQ-inclusive education, we did extensive comparisons of religiously affiliated and religiously unaffiliated educators to investigate the impact of religious affiliation on their attitudes and practices. (Note: To allow for mixed religious upbringings, affiliations, and faiths, participants were asked to “check all that apply” for select questions; hence, numbers will not always add up to 100%.)

Seventeen percent of educators who filled out our survey were from schools affiliated with a religion or a religious group, and all of these were from Christian-based schools. More specifically, the vast majority worked in Catholic schools (94% Roman Catholic and 1% Eastern Catholic), while 3% were from Protestant Anabaptist schools (e.g., Amish, Hutterite, Mennonite), and 2% were from a Christian non-denominational faith.

Given that the overwhelming majority of educators from faith-based schools worked in Catholic schools, the following analysis is based

on these responses only, and comparisons are made to educators who worked in secular schools. Unfortunately, the numbers were too low to do any type of a comparative analysis for educators who worked in other types of faith-based schools.

Educators from Catholic schools were only slightly less likely than those from secular schools to indicate that it was important for them to address LGBTQ issues (83% vs. 88%). Similarly, Catholic school educators were almost as likely as those from secular schools to approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education (83% vs. 85%; only 6% opposed vs. 4% from secular schools). Respondents from Catholic schools were only slightly less likely (85%) than those from secular schools (91%) to indicate that students should be free to express their gender any way they wanted.

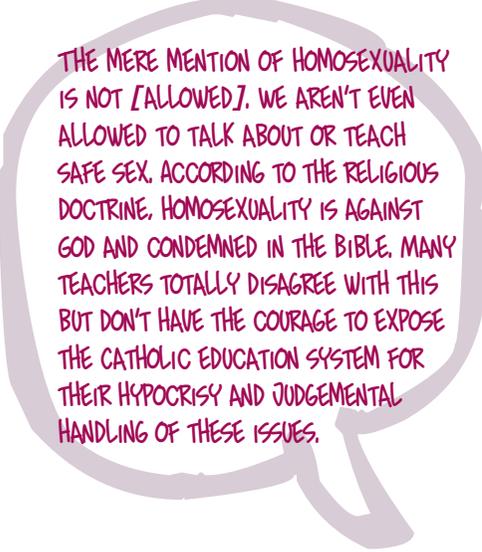
A quote is presented inside a light orange speech bubble with a drop shadow. The text is written in a green, all-caps, sans-serif font. The bubble has a tail pointing towards the bottom left.

OUR SCHOOL HAS A LONG HISTORY OF POSITIVE WORK WITH SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH. OUR CHAPLAIN (CATHOLIC SCHOOL) IS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THIS. TOGETHER WITH INTERESTED STAFF, THE CHAPLAIN HAS PROVIDED A SAFE SPACE FOR SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH. NOT A SEXUAL MINORITY INDIVIDUAL BUT, TOGETHER WITH OTHER STAFF, IS PROVIDING ONGOING INFORMAL EDUCATION FOR STAFF LEADING TO A GROWING POSITIVE SPACE FOR SEXUAL MINORITY STUDENTS.

While values were similar, we found substantial differences between educators from Catholic schools and those from secular schools in the practice of LGBTQ education. For instance, only 57% of respondents from Catholic schools said they would feel comfortable discussing LGBTQ issues with students (compared with 76% of those from secular schools). Further, only 19% of Catholic school participants reported participating in LGBTQ-inclusive education efforts, which is less than half the rate of involvement of secular school participants (41%). One in ten (10%) Catholic school educators reported having a GSA (34% of educators from secular schools). To put this in perspective, 83% of Catholic school educators said it was important to them to address LGBTQ issues, but only 57% would be comfortable having such conversations, and only 19% reported having ever done it.

When asked why they did not practice LGBTQ-inclusive education, very few Catholic school educators cited their own religious beliefs. Their biggest reason for not practicing LGBTQ-inclusive education was insufficient training (29% vs. 17% from secular schools), followed by fear-based reasons concerning lack of leadership; for instance, Catholic educators were more likely than secular school educators to report fear-based reasons outside of the school, such as parent opposition, concern over legal issues, or opposition of religious groups (34% Catholic vs. 10%

secular), and fear-based reasons within the school system, such as the opposition of colleagues, administrators, division staff, or school trustees and lack of a permanent contract or fear of being passed over for a promotion (40% Catholic vs. 20% secular) as reasons for not addressing LGBTQ issues.



THE MERE MENTION OF HOMOSEXUALITY IS NOT [ALLOWED]. WE AREN'T EVEN ALLOWED TO TALK ABOUT OR TEACH SAFE SEX. ACCORDING TO THE RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE, HOMOSEXUALITY IS AGAINST GOD AND CONDEMNED IN THE BIBLE. MANY TEACHERS TOTALLY DISAGREE WITH THIS BUT DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO EXPOSE THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR THEIR HYPOCRISY AND JUDGEMENTAL HANDLING OF THESE ISSUES.

Overall, there were striking similarities between educators from Catholic schools and those from secular schools. For instance, as reported earlier, educators from Catholic schools were just as likely to be aware of all forms of harassment (e.g., verbal, physical, sexual harassment and humiliation, etc.) as educators from secular schools (e.g., aware of verbal harassment – 66% Catholic vs. 67% secular; and aware of physical harassment –

32% Catholic vs. 34% secular). Respondents from Catholic schools were just as likely to intervene when they heard “that’s so gay” (86% responded always or frequently vs. 88% at secular schools) or other homophobic comments (87% Catholic vs. 85% secular). When asked if they felt teachers should be able to opt out of LGBTQ-inclusive education if their religion opposed it, educators from Catholic schools were only slightly more likely to support opt-out options (20%) than educators from secular schools (17%). Some of the differences between secular and Catholic school participants’ responses offer reason to support LGBTQ-inclusive education in Catholic schools. For instance, educators in Catholic schools were more likely to hear homonegative language (54% vs. 49% secular school educators) or homophobic language (33% vs. 27% secular school educators) every day or each week in their schools. They were also slightly more likely to have received complaints about engaging in LGBTQ-inclusive education practices (22% Catholic vs. 18% secular). While Catholic school educators were much less likely to have participated in LGBTQ-inclusive education efforts in their schools, their reasons for not doing it stem from lack of leadership and training, not from lack of need for LGBTQ-inclusive education in Catholic schools.

### Religious affiliation of participants

The vast majority of educators reported that they were raised in a Christian faith (85%),

while 9% indicated that they were either not raised in any religion or were raised in atheist households, 6% were raised in spiritual but not religious households, 2% in Jewish households, 2% in Islamic households, and 2% in homes that followed a First Nation spirituality. Most of the respondents raised Christian were from Roman Catholic households (57%), followed by Reformed (e.g., Calvinist, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Church) (15%), Anglican (12%), Christian non-denominational (7%), Evangelical (e.g., Alliance, Baptist, Pentecostal) (4%), and/or Lutheran (4%). Roughly 4% reported being raised in some other Christian faith. Of the educators raised in Judaism, 48% were raised in Reform Judaism (e.g., Liberal and Progressive Judaism), 46% in Conservative Judaism, 31% in Humanistic Judaism, and/or 4% in some other Jewish denomination. The majority of Islamic participants reported being raised in Sunni households (82%), in Quaranism (14%), and/or some other Islamic denomination (4%).

While 85% of respondents were raised in a Christian faith, only 48% indicated Christianity as their current religion. One in five (20%) said they were either atheist or of no religion, while a quarter (26%) were spiritual in a non-religious way, and 4% were agnostic. Of the educators who currently identify as Christian, 58% reported that they were Roman Catholic, while 13% were Christian non-denominational, 11% Reformed, 10%

Anglican, 5% Evangelical, and 9% another Christian faith. Further, 5% reported that their current religious affiliation was Buddhism, followed by First Nation spirituality (2%), Judaism (1%), and/or another religious faith (7%).

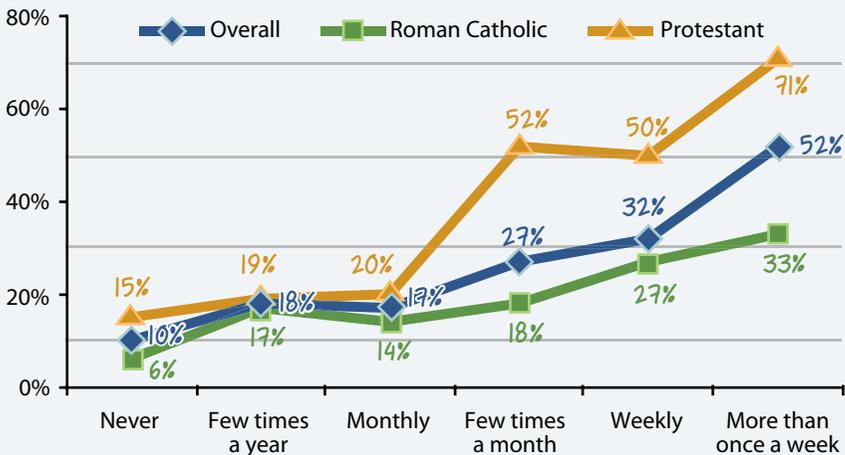
As previously mentioned, 6% of educators felt that opposition from a religious group was preventing them from addressing LGBTQ issues, and 2% also reported that it was contrary to their religious convictions. Christian participants were slightly more likely to point to their religious principles (4%). It is important, however, not to paint all those who believed in the Christian faith with the same brush. For instance, <1% of Protestant-Anglicans stated that it was against their religion as their reason, and contrary to official Church claims of doctrinal authority for opposing LGBTQ-inclusive education, only 3% of Roman Catholics cited their religious convictions as their reason for not addressing LGBTQ issues. However, 1 in 5 (20%) educators from a Protestant-Evangelical religious faith indicated that what prevented them from addressing LGBTQ issues was that doing so was contrary to their religion. Interestingly, even though only 3% of Roman Catholic educators reported that LGBTQ issues conflicted with their religious principles, they were far more likely than Protestant-Evangelicals to choose opposition by religious groups as a reason for inaction (10% vs. 3%).

We found similar results when we asked whether teachers should be able to opt out of LGBTQ-inclusive education if it were against their religion. Eighteen percent of educators agreed with the statement, with participants of a First Nation spirituality being the most likely to agree (48%), and 22% of Christians. Only 19% of Roman Catholic educators agreed with the statement, compared to 68% of Protestant-Evangelicals. Only 9% of respondents who either had no current religion or were atheists agreed that teachers should be able to opt out for religious reasons.

Regardless of religious affiliation, however, we found that agreement as to whether teachers should be able to opt out on the basis of religious belief increased with greater religious service attendance. For instance, fewer than 1 in 5 (18%) educators who attended services pertaining to their religion only a few times per year agreed that teachers should be able to opt out, but 52% of respondents who typically attended services more than once a week agreed.

Interestingly, as shown in Figure 26, the relationship between whether educators agreed that teachers should be able to

**FIGURE 26: AGREEMENT THAT RELIGIOUSLY OPPOSED TEACHERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO OPT OUT OF LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (BY RELIGIOUS SERVICE ATTENDANCE)**



opt out on the basis of religious belief and frequency of religious service attendance was weakest among Roman Catholics and highest among respondents currently affiliated with a Protestant faith. For example, 71% of educators currently from a Protestant faith who typically attended church more than once a week agreed to the statement that teachers should be able to opt out of LGBTQ-inclusive education, while only a third (33%) of Catholic educators who attended church with the same frequency agreed to the statement.

We also found that educators who answered “yes,” their religious or spiritual beliefs influenced their decisions about LGBTQ issues, were more likely to agree that teachers should be able to opt out of LGBTQ-inclusive education if it were against their religion. A third (32%) of participants who reported that their religious beliefs “strongly” influenced their decisions about LGBTQ issues thought that teachers should be able to opt out, compared to 22% who said “yes, somewhat” or “yes, a little,” and 13% who reported that it did not at all.

### **LGBTQ educators’ experiences**

Based on unweighted data, in total, 473 participants (16%) identified as LGBTQ. Of these participants, 48% identified as “gay,” 38% as “lesbian,” 17% as “queer,” 22% as “bisexual,” and 4% as “questioning” in a “check all that

apply” question. In addition, 81 participants (3%) identified as transgender (see “Analysis” above).

Most (73%) LGBTQ educators<sup>3</sup> reported that when they were hired, their sexual orientation or transgender identity was not known to the school administration, while 17% indicated that their administration had known. One in ten (10%) educators said that administration realized the educators were LGBTQ only after they had started their employment. Similarly, 76% of LGBTQ educators who had permanent contracts said their school administration did not know the educators were LGBTQ when they received their permanent contract. A third (34%) of LGBTQ educators had been advised not to come out at their school, with 59% of those educators reporting that the advice had been given by partners, friends, or family members, 56% by their classmate(s), 26% by their school administration, and 14% by an education professor.

Despite the fact that 34% of LGBTQ educators had been advised not to come out at their school and that the majority of participants reported that their school administration did not know participants were LGBTQ when they were hired (73%), most respondents indicated at least someone at their school was currently aware they were LGBTQ (88%). Almost all gay men (93%) and lesbian participants (94%) were out to at least

<sup>3</sup> The rest of the analyses of LGBTQ participants in this report are based on weighted data.

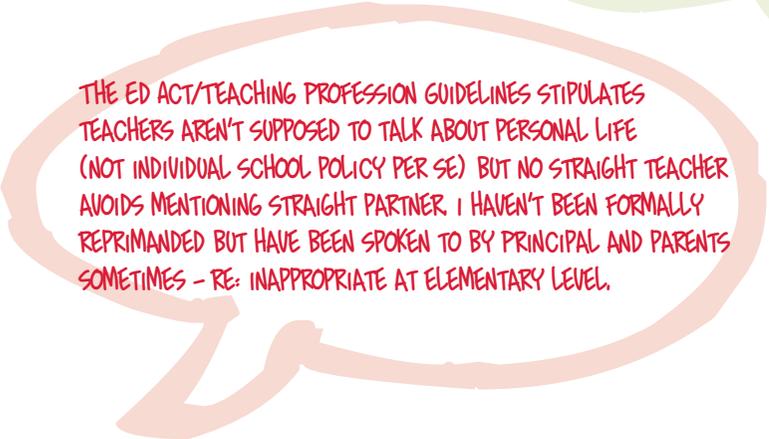
one person within their school community; however, only 3 out of 5 (61%) bisexual respondents reported being out to at least one person. (Note: Too few responses from transgender participants to analyze separately here.)

Almost half (49%) of LGBTQ respondents reported that many of their colleagues knew they were LGBTQ, and 42% indicated that most of their administrators were aware as well. For 29% of LGBTQ respondents, only select individuals at their school were aware, while 14% indicated that many students knew and 16% reported that their whole school community (including parents and students) were aware that they were LGBTQ and that this was their choice. Fewer than 1% of LGBTQ educators reported being outed against their wishes at their school.

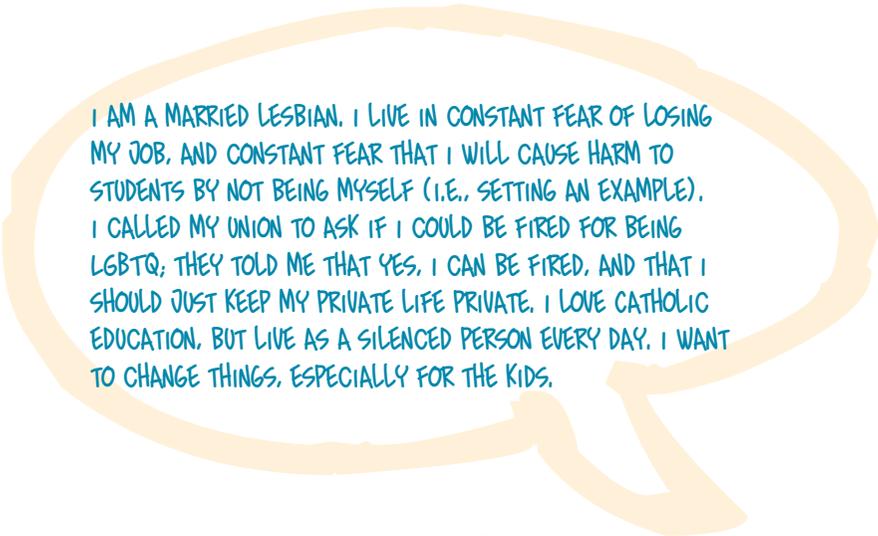
LGBTQ educators were, however, far less likely to have ever mentioned their spouses (or husbands/wives/partners/girlfriends/boyfriends) in conversation with students (59% said they discussed personal life) than CH participants (84%). This number was even lower for LGBTQ teachers in Catholic schools, with only 35% having mentioned their personal lives in conversations with students (while 86% of CH participants in Catholic schools reported they had mentioned their spouse in conversation with students).



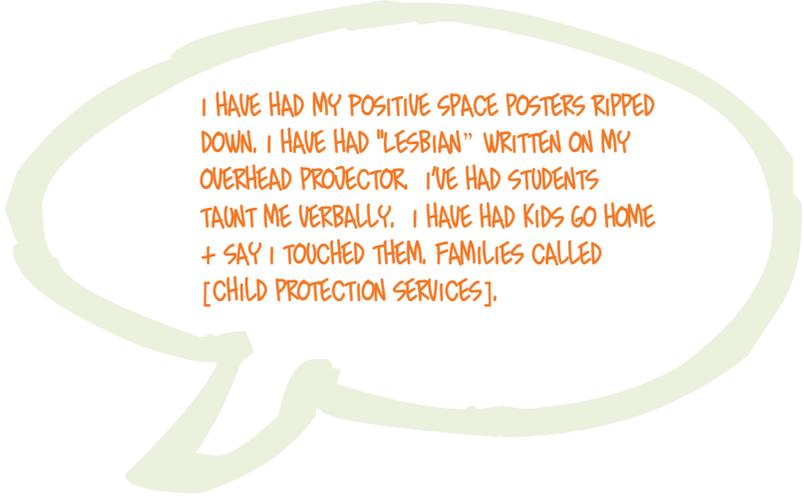
MY DAUGHTER IS GAY AND CURRENTLY WORKING FOR A CATHOLIC BOARD. SHE MUST KEEP HER RELATIONSHIP/MARRIAGE A SECRET FOR FEAR OF BEING BLACK BALLED.



THE ED ACT/TEACHING PROFESSION GUIDELINES STIPULATES TEACHERS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO TALK ABOUT PERSONAL LIFE (NOT INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL POLICY PER SE) BUT NO STRAIGHT TEACHER AVOIDS MENTIONING STRAIGHT PARTNER. I HAVEN'T BEEN FORMALLY REPRIMANDED BUT HAVE BEEN SPOKEN TO BY PRINCIPAL AND PARENTS SOMETIMES - RE: INAPPROPRIATE AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL.

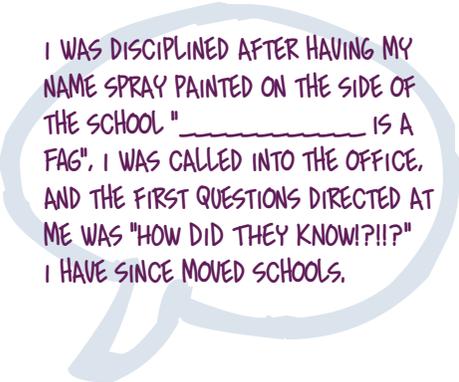


I AM A MARRIED LESBIAN. I LIVE IN CONSTANT FEAR OF LOSING MY JOB, AND CONSTANT FEAR THAT I WILL CAUSE HARM TO STUDENTS BY NOT BEING MYSELF (I.E., SETTING AN EXAMPLE). I CALLED MY UNION TO ASK IF I COULD BE FIRED FOR BEING LGBTQ; THEY TOLD ME THAT YES, I CAN BE FIRED, AND THAT I SHOULD JUST KEEP MY PRIVATE LIFE PRIVATE. I LOVE CATHOLIC EDUCATION, BUT LIVE AS A SILENCED PERSON EVERY DAY. I WANT TO CHANGE THINGS, ESPECIALLY FOR THE KIDS.



I HAVE HAD MY POSITIVE SPACE POSTERS RIPPED DOWN. I HAVE HAD "LESBIAN" WRITTEN ON MY OVERHEAD PROJECTOR. I'VE HAD STUDENTS TAUNT ME VERBALLY. I HAVE HAD KIDS GO HOME + SAY I TOUCHED THEM. FAMILIES CALLED [CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES].

Two-thirds (67%) of educators overall reported they were aware of a teacher being harassed by students because they were LGBT or were perceived to be LGBT, with 23% reporting that a teacher had been harassed because of their gender expression. LGBTQ participants were more likely to be aware of harassment of other teachers by students because they were or believed to be LGBT (71% vs. 63% of CH educators). LGBTQ respondents were also more likely to be aware of students harassing other teachers because of their gender expression (28% vs. 18% CH educators).



I WAS DISCIPLINED AFTER HAVING MY NAME SPRAY PAINTED ON THE SIDE OF THE SCHOOL " \_\_\_\_\_ IS A FAG". I WAS CALLED INTO THE OFFICE, AND THE FIRST QUESTIONS DIRECTED AT ME WAS "HOW DID THEY KNOW?!!?" I HAVE SINCE MOVED SCHOOLS.

When asked about teachers being harassed by colleagues, a quarter (26%) of all respondents reported being aware of a teacher having been harassed by their colleagues because they were LGBT or perceived to be LGBT and 10% were aware of a teacher having been harassed for their gender expression.

LGBTQ educators were more likely than CH educators to be aware of other teachers being harassed by colleagues because they were or believed to be LGBT (34% LGBTQ vs. 21% CH educators), though LGBTQ participants and CH educators were equally aware of teachers being harassed by colleagues because of their gender expression (9% LGBTQ vs. 9% CH educators). Finally, LGBTQ educators were slightly more likely to be aware of colleagues being excluded because they were or believed to be LGBT (33%) than CH participants (28%). (Note: The survey's question about harassment as well as exclusion based on transgender identity had too few cases to analyze separately.)

Finally, we asked LGBTQ educators who were out to their whole school community how supported they felt at their school. Nearly half (47%) felt that their school community's response to them being openly LGBTQ at school was very supportive, followed by 48% who reported that it was generally supportive, and 4% who indicated that while the school was supportive, the surrounding community was not. Approximately 1 in 5 (21%) lesbians were out to their whole school community (including students and parents), while 15% of gay men were, followed by only 6% of bisexual participants. No transgender educators were out to their whole school community. Of the respondents who reported being out to their whole school community, nearly three-quarters (73%) of gay men felt very

supported (23% felt their school community was generally supportive), but only 1 in 5 (21%) lesbians felt very supported and 73% felt their school community was generally supportive.

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

### Personal connection with LGBTQ individuals

Personal connections between educators and LGBTQ individuals outside the school is key to the discussion of LGBTQ-inclusive education in two ways. First, having such a connection is often instrumental in enabling others to overcome passively absorbed negative attitudes to LGBTQ people (Herek & Capitanio, 1996); second, participants told us (as reported above in “Comfort level in discussing LGBTQ topics with students”) that they believed it was important for LGBTQ students to have someone to talk to.

Virtually all (99%) participants reported personally knowing someone who is LGBTQ. This may help to explain our findings of a very high level of support for LGBTQ-inclusive education. Nearly three-quarters (72%) indicated that they have an LGBTQ friend or acquaintance, 66% have a co-worker or colleague who is LGBTQ, 55% have a close friend, and 45% know of a student who is LGBTQ. Further, over a third (37%) reported having an LGBTQ extended family member (e.g., cousin, niece/nephew or sibling’s child, grandparent, or in-law), 7% indicated having an LGBTQ sibling, and 4% have a child who identifies as LGBTQ.

However, only a third (35%) of educators reported that they have had a student talk to them about the student’s being LGBTQ. Not surprisingly, LGBTQ participants were more likely to have had such a conversation with at least one student (54%) than CH educators (30%). Interestingly, cisgender men were significantly more likely to have had a student talk to them about being LGBTQ (46%) than cisgender women (31%) or transgender respondents (30%). Educators from racialized groups (38%) and White respondents (35%) were somewhat more likely than FNMI participants (28%) to report having had a student talk to them about being LGBTQ. Respondents from Catholic schools were less likely to have talked to a student about being LGBTQ (28%) than participants from secular schools (36%). Educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies (40%), were also more likely to have talked to a student about being LGBTQ than were those without such policies (33%); however, there was no difference between respondents from schools with transphobic harassment policies, with 38% of each reporting having had a student talk to them about being LGBTQ.



ALREADY IN MY FIRST MONTH OF TEACHING, A STUDENT HAS COME OUT AND I HAVE BEEN OPEN WITH HER ABOUT MY FAMILY. I FEEL IT HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE.

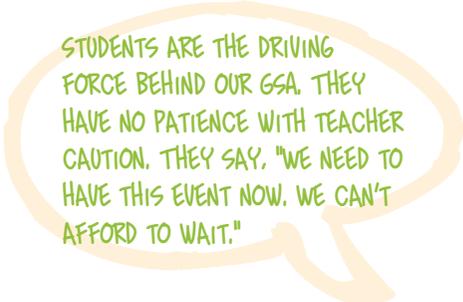
As mentioned previously, guidance counsellors were far more likely to have had a student talk with them about being LGBTQ (86%) than either teachers (33%) or administrators (29%). Further, we found that educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were more likely to have had a student speak with them (38%) than those who were either neutral (27%) or opposed (11%), which suggests that educators' attitudes are often apparent to LGBTQ students. Respondents who did not personally identify with any formal religion were most likely to have had a student speak with them about being LGBTQ (41%), followed by educators whose current religion generally approved of same-sex marriage (37%), those whose religion had a mixed perspective on same-sex marriage (35%), and those whose religion was opposed (25%).

Size of school also affected educators' likelihood of having had a student speak with them, with those from larger schools reporting higher likelihoods than those from smaller schools. For instance, only 1 in 5 (19%) educators from schools with 250 students or fewer reported students talking to them about being LGBTQ, followed by 23% from schools with 251 to 500 students, 35% from 501 to 750 student schools, 49% for 751 to 1000 student schools, and finally almost two-thirds (63%) from schools with over 1000 students.

Unsurprisingly, early-years educators were less likely to report having had a student talk

to them about being LGBTQ (16%), followed by middle-years educators (29%) and senior-years educators (48%). However, 16% is still a substantial number and early-years educators need to be prepared.

### Student support for LGBTQ peers



STUDENTS ARE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND OUR GSA. THEY HAVE NO PATIENCE WITH TEACHER CAUTION. THEY SAY, "WE NEED TO HAVE THIS EVENT NOW. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WAIT."

Nearly 3 in 5 (58%) educators agreed (31% strongly agreed and 27% somewhat agreed) that "there is a lot of untapped, potential support for LGBTQ students in the student body."

- ⇒ Guidance counsellors were more likely to agree with this statement (83%) than teachers (58%) or administrators or other non-teachers (51%).
- ⇒ While participants from secular schools were somewhat more likely to agree that there was potential support among students (60%), over half (52%) of educators from Catholic schools also agreed.
- ⇒ LGBTQ respondents were more likely to agree (74%) than CH educators (55%).

- ⇒ White respondents (60%) and those from racialized groups (60%) were more likely to agree than FNMI educators (40%).
- ⇒ Educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies were only slightly more likely to agree (61%) than respondents from schools without such policies (55%). There was even less of a difference when it came to participants from schools with transphobic harassment policies (61% vs. 58%).
- ⇒ Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were more than twice as likely to agree (63%) than those who were neutral (31%) or opposed (18%) to LGBTQ-inclusive education.
- ⇒ Respondents whose religion was generally in favour of same-sex marriage were more likely to agree (63%) than those whose religion had a mixed perspective (56%) or opposed (51%). Participants with no formal religion were, however, most likely to agree (65%).
- ⇒ Educators from larger schools were more likely to agree: 75% in schools with student population over 1000; 66% in schools with 751 to 1000 students; 64% in schools with 501 to 750; 52% in 251 to 500 student schools; and 47% for schools with 250 students or fewer.

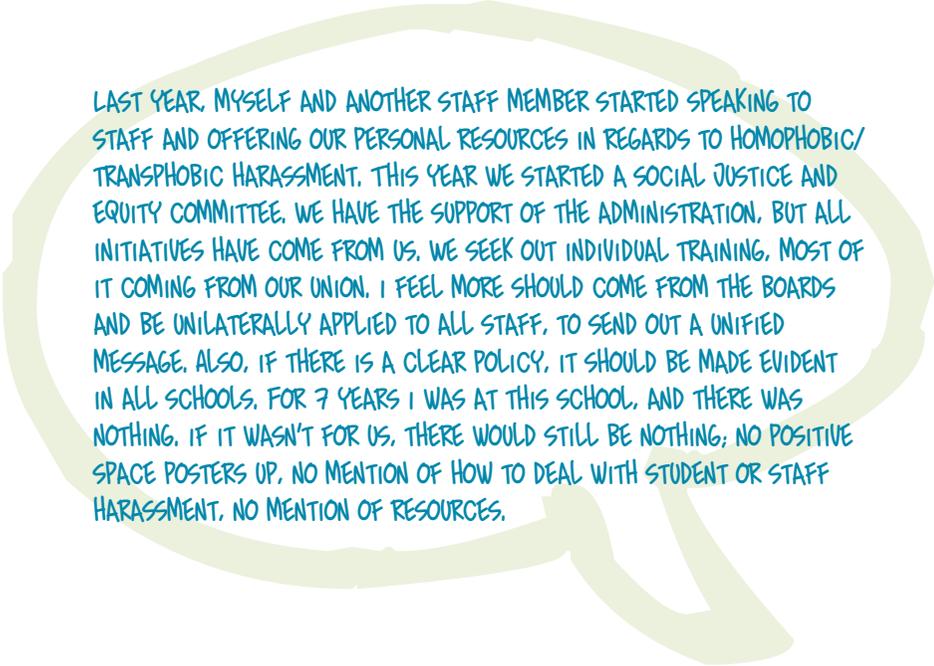
- ⇒ While educators who worked with higher grades were more likely to agree that there was untapped solidarity, a substantial number of educators working with lower grade levels also agreed. There was a steady increase in agreement through early years—Pre-K (45%), K to Grade 2 (46%), Grades 3 to 6 (48%)—with a jump through the junior high middle-years grades—Grade 7 (56%), Grade 8 (59%)—followed by another leap into the senior-years grades—Grade 9 (65%), Grade 10 (66%), Grade 11 (67%), Grade 12 (66%).

The results of the student Climate Survey also suggested that there was significant potential support for LGBTQ students, with 58% of CH senior-years students saying they were distressed to some degree when they heard homophobic comments.

### **Leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive education**

Participants were asked who demonstrated leadership with respect to the following forms of LGBTQ-inclusive education: curriculum, programming (e.g., forming GSAs), and safe schools or anti-harassment policies. Overall, we found that participants' perspectives on who shows leadership varied greatly with their own vantage point as teachers, counsellors, or administrators, which may suggest that educators were sometimes unaware of each other's efforts in the area of LGBTQ-inclusive education. What makes this situation notable is that LGBTQ-inclusive

education has been hampered by system-wide silences which can leave educators with an unduly pessimistic view of the degree of support for this work. Each area is discussed in turn below.



LAST YEAR, MYSELF AND ANOTHER STAFF MEMBER STARTED SPEAKING TO STAFF AND OFFERING OUR PERSONAL RESOURCES IN REGARDS TO HOMOPHOBIC/ TRANSPHOBIC HARASSMENT. THIS YEAR WE STARTED A SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY COMMITTEE. WE HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION, BUT ALL INITIATIVES HAVE COME FROM US. WE SEEK OUT INDIVIDUAL TRAINING, MOST OF IT COMING FROM OUR UNION. I FEEL MORE SHOULD COME FROM THE BOARDS AND BE UNILATERALLY APPLIED TO ALL STAFF, TO SEND OUT A UNIFIED MESSAGE. ALSO, IF THERE IS A CLEAR POLICY, IT SHOULD BE MADE EVIDENT IN ALL SCHOOLS. FOR 7 YEARS I WAS AT THIS SCHOOL, AND THERE WAS NOTHING. IF IT WASN'T FOR US, THERE WOULD STILL BE NOTHING; NO POSITIVE SPACE POSTERS UP, NO MENTION OF HOW TO DEAL WITH STUDENT OR STAFF HARASSMENT, NO MENTION OF RESOURCES.

#### Curriculum:

- ⇒ Participants were most likely to see teachers as showing leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum. Fifty-nine percent of all participants reported that teachers showed leadership, followed by students (31%), guidance counsellors (27%), principals (23%), school board/ trustees (18%), Ministry of Education (17%), and vice principals (16%). Nearly a quarter (23%) of educators indicated that no one at their school showed leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive education.

⇒ Guidance counsellors were even more likely than teachers themselves to report teachers' leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum (66% vs. 59%). They were also more likely than teachers or administrators to see themselves as leaders in this area (63% vs. 25% teachers vs. 39% administrators). Guidance counsellors were also more likely to see other groups as showing leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum:

- » students (53% vs. 30% teachers and 33% administrators);
- » principals (36% vs. 22% teachers and 33% administrators);
- » vice principals (36% vs. 15% teachers and 25% administrators); and
- » support staff (31% vs. 10% teachers and 15% administrators).

⇒ Administrators and other non-teachers were more likely (34%) than teachers (18%) or guidance counsellors (28%) to feel that school boards or trustees showed leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum.

⇒ Both administrators (21%) and guidance counsellors (21%) reported that such leadership came from their Ministry of Education, while only 17% of teachers agreed as much.

⇒ Educators from Catholic schools were more likely to report that no one

showed leadership (42% vs. 19% for participants from secular schools); however, they were slightly more likely to feel that their Ministry of Education showed leadership (20%) than respondents from secular schools (17%).

⇒ Participants from schools without homophobic harassment policies were more likely to feel that no one provided leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum (30% vs. 16% for educators from schools with such policies). A similar result was found for educators from schools without transphobic harassment policies (26% vs. 16%).

⇒ LGBTQ participants were less likely to report that no one at their school offered LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum leadership (14%) than CH educators (26%). They were also more likely to feel that teachers showed such leadership (73% vs. 56%).

#### Programming:

⇒ Over half (51%) of respondents felt that teachers also showed leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive programming (e.g., forming a GSA), followed by students (32%), guidance counsellors (23%), principals (18%), school board/trustees (14%), and vice principals (13%). Over a quarter (29%) felt that no one at their school showed leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive programming.

- ⇒ Results were similar to curriculum leadership as guidance counsellors were more likely to feel that teachers showed leadership in programming (63% vs. 51% teachers and 48% administrators and other non-teachers) and that guidance counsellors showed leadership (55% vs. 21% teachers and 37% administrators). Guidance counsellors were much less likely to report no one showed leadership (9% vs. 30% teachers and 21% administrators), and much more likely to feel that students showed leadership (56% vs. 31% teachers and 39% administrators).
- ⇒ Administrators were more likely to report that programming leadership came from principals (31% vs. 17% teachers and 28% guidance counsellors) or vice principals (25% vs. 12% teachers and 24% guidance counsellors). They were also more likely to report that such leadership came from their school board/trustees (22% vs. 13% teachers and 12% guidance counsellors) and their Ministry of Education (21% vs. 11% teachers and 10% guidance counsellors).
- ⇒ Educators from Catholic schools were more likely to feel that no one showed leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive programming (48% vs. 25% for participants from secular schools); however, they were slightly more likely to report that such leadership came from their Ministry of Education (16% vs. 11%).
- ⇒ Respondents were twice as likely to report that no one showed leadership in schools without relevant harassment policies as in schools with such policies. Specifically, 41% of respondents from schools without homophobic harassment policies felt that no one showed leadership, compared to only 19% of educators from schools with such a policy. Results were similar for participants from schools that had transphobic harassment policies (36% vs. 18%).
- ⇒ White educators (30%) were more likely than FNMI (19%) or racialized (16%) participants to feel that no one showed leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive programming. Racialized participants (60%) were somewhat more likely than White (51%) or FNMI (59%) respondents to feel that such leadership came from teachers. Racialized participants (44%) were also more likely than White (32%) or FNMI (30%) participants to feel that leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive programming came from students. FNMI participants (27%) were more likely than White (14%) or racialized (9%) participants to report that leadership came from their school board/trustees. FNMI educators (26%) were also more likely than White (12%) or racialized (7%) participants to feel that leadership came from their Ministry of Education.

THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS TO BEGIN AT THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL SO THAT THEY BECOME STRONGER IN THEIR ABILITIES TO BACK STAFF UP WHEN THESE ISSUES ARE DEALT WITH OR BROUGHT TO THEIR ATTENTION. WITH KNOWLEDGE COMES COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE IN DEALING WITH ISSUES. I BELIEVE THAT PD IN THIS AREA SHOULD NOT BE VOLUNTARY. TOO MANY STUDENTS GO THROUGH THINGS IN SILENCE AND SHOULD NOT HAVE TO.

- Safe school or anti-harassment policies:
- ⇒ While 18% of educators thought that no one at their school showed leadership in LGBTQ-inclusive safe school or anti-harassment policies, 56% felt that teachers did, followed by principals (47%), vice principals (32%), school boards/trustees (29%), students (27%), guidance counsellors (26%), and Ministry of Education (23%).
  - ⇒ Not only were guidance counsellors (54%) more likely than teachers (24%) or administrators (35%) to select themselves as leaders when it came to leadership on inclusive safe school policies, they were also more likely to see others as showing leadership:
    - » teachers (62% vs. 56% teachers and 51% administrators);
    - » principals (59% vs. 46% teachers and 51% administrators);
    - » vice principals (57% vs. 30% teachers and 43% administrators); and
    - » students (36% vs. 26% teachers and 23% administrators).
  - ⇒ Guidance counsellors (10%) were also somewhat less likely than teachers (19%) or administrators (12%) to feel that no one provided leadership. Administrators and other non-teachers (47%) were more likely than teachers (27%) or guidance counsellors (33%) to feel that leadership for safe school policies came from their school board/trustee. Administrators (29%) were also somewhat more likely than teachers (23%) or guidance counsellors (23%) to report that such leadership came from their Ministry of Education.
  - ⇒ Among educators from Catholic schools, 36% felt that no one provided leadership on safe school policies (vs. 14% of participants from secular schools).
  - ⇒ Participants from schools without homophobic harassment policies were more likely to feel that no one provided leadership (35%) than those from schools with such policies (9%). Similar results were found among educators from schools without transphobic harassment policies (28% reported no

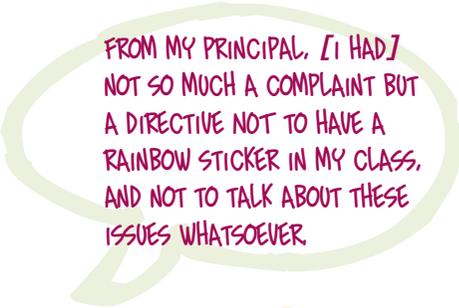
one vs. 7% for respondents from schools with such policies).

- ⇒ LGBTQ participants were more optimistic in their perceptions of leadership in their schools. That is, they were less likely to report feeling that no one provided leadership toward LGBTQ-inclusive safe school policies (12% vs. 20% for CH educators). They were more likely to feel that leadership came from teachers (66% vs. 54%) and their school board/trustees (38% vs. 25%), and as likely to report that leadership came from students (25% vs. 26%).

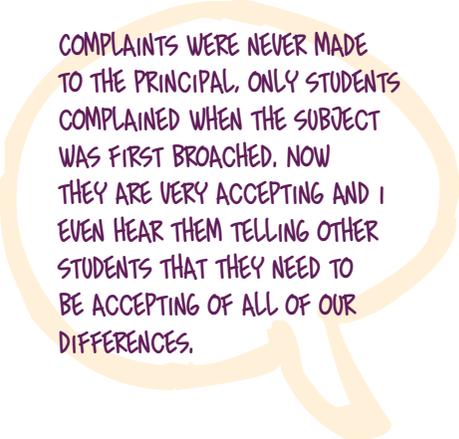
### Experiences of complaints about practicing LGBTQ-inclusive education

We asked teachers who included LGBTQ content in their courses whether they had received any complaints for doing so. Only 1 in 5 (19%) teachers reported having received complaints for including LGBTQ content. LGBTQ teachers were more likely (28%) than CH teachers (14%) to have received complaints. Two in five (42%) transgender teachers indicated they had received a complaint when they included LGBTQ content, and slightly more cisgender women (20%) than cisgender men (15%) reported having received complaints. FNMI teachers (37%) and racialized teachers (25%) were more likely to report having received complaints than White teachers (17%). Slightly more teachers from Catholic schools

(22%) indicated having received complaints than teachers from secular schools (18%). Teachers from schools with homophobic harassment policies were only slightly less likely to report having received complaints (20%) than teachers from schools without such policies (23%); teachers from schools with transphobic harassment policies were also less likely to report having received complaints (18%) than teachers from schools without policies (27%).



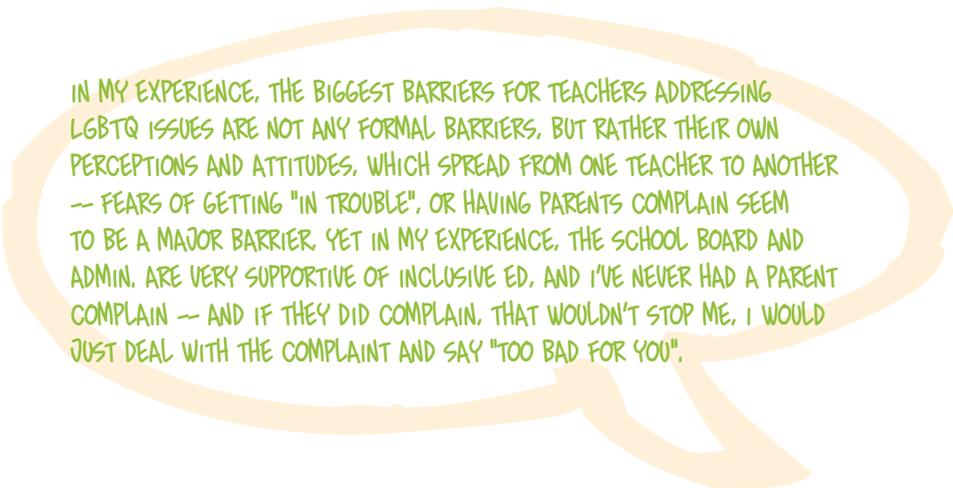
FROM MY PRINCIPAL, [I HAD] NOT SO MUCH A COMPLAINT BUT A DIRECTIVE NOT TO HAVE A RAINBOW STICKER IN MY CLASS, AND NOT TO TALK ABOUT THESE ISSUES WHATSOEVER.



COMPLAINTS WERE NEVER MADE TO THE PRINCIPAL, ONLY STUDENTS COMPLAINED WHEN THE SUBJECT WAS FIRST BROACHED. NOW THEY ARE VERY ACCEPTING AND I EVEN HEAR THEM TELLING OTHER STUDENTS THAT THEY NEED TO BE ACCEPTING OF ALL OF OUR DIFFERENCES.

Of the small number who had received complaints, over half (53%) reported that the complaints had come from parents; 47%, students; 26%, other teachers; and/or 13%, their administration. More LGBTQ teachers reported having received complaints from parents (66%) than CH teachers (47%). They were also much more likely to have received complaints from their school administration (22%) than their CH colleagues (6%); however, compared to LGBTQ teachers (41%), CH teachers were more likely to have received complaints from students (48%). Similarly, FNMI (77%) and racialized teachers (69%) were more likely to have received complaints from students than were White teachers (39%); however, White teachers (58%) reported being more likely to have received complaints from parents than were FNMI (27%) and racialized teachers (38%). Teachers from Catholic schools were also more likely

to report that the complaints they received had come from parents (77% vs. 49% teachers from secular schools), but there was no difference in having received complaints from their school administration (both 13%), and they were somewhat less likely to report receiving complaints from students (36% vs. 49% teachers from secular schools) and from other teachers (14% vs. 27%, respectively). Finally, teachers from schools with homophobic harassment policies were more likely to receive complaints from parents (61%) than teachers from schools without such policies (39%), but they were less likely to report having received complaints from other teachers (21% vs. 41%). Similar results were found for teachers from schools with transphobic harassment policies regarding parents (60% vs. 43%) and other teachers (14% vs. 40%).

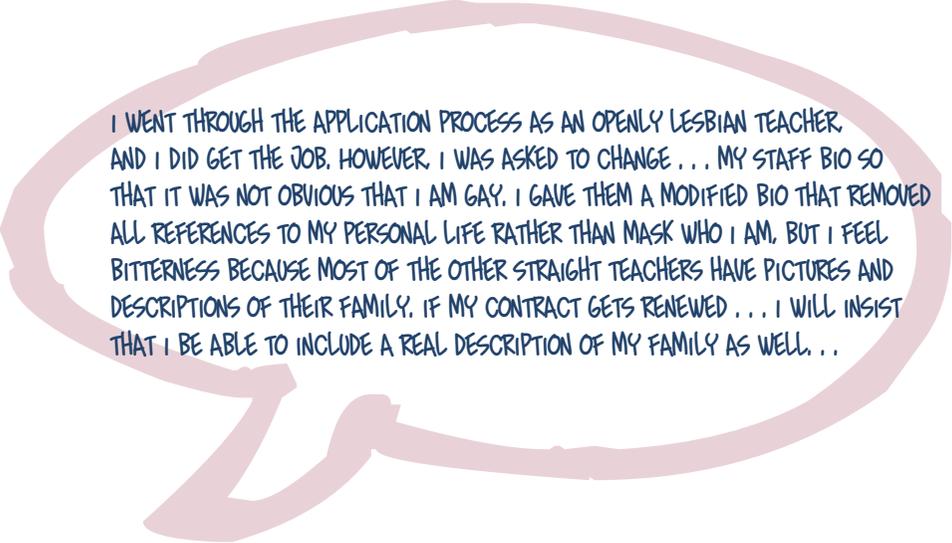


IN MY EXPERIENCE, THE BIGGEST BARRIERS FOR TEACHERS ADDRESSING LGBTQ ISSUES ARE NOT ANY FORMAL BARRIERS, BUT RATHER THEIR OWN PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES, WHICH SPREAD FROM ONE TEACHER TO ANOTHER -- FEARS OF GETTING "IN TROUBLE", OR HAVING PARENTS COMPLAIN SEEM TO BE A MAJOR BARRIER. YET IN MY EXPERIENCE, THE SCHOOL BOARD AND ADMIN. ARE VERY SUPPORTIVE OF INCLUSIVE ED, AND I'VE NEVER HAD A PARENT COMPLAIN -- AND IF THEY DID COMPLAIN, THAT WOULDN'T STOP ME, I WOULD JUST DEAL WITH THE COMPLAINT AND SAY "TOO BAD FOR YOU".

Of that small group of teachers who received complaints, 72% reported that their principal had supported them. Teachers who received complaints but worked in schools with homophobic harassment policies were more likely to report having been supported by their principal (84%) than teachers from schools without such policies (44%). Similar results were found for teachers from schools with transphobic harassment policies (84% vs. 58%). It is notable that 84% of teachers from religious schools who received complaints reported having been supported by their principal, compared to 70% of teachers from secular schools. Teachers in Catholic schools were most likely to report their principals supported them (88%). LGBTQ teachers were slightly more likely to report that their principals supported them than CH teachers (72% vs. 65%). All transgender

teachers indicated that their principals supported them (100%). Teachers who were cisgender men were more likely to report their principal supported them (87%) than cisgender women (66%). Almost all FNMI teachers reported that their principals supported them (97%) and nearly three-quarters (74%) of White teachers reported they were supported, but less than one-third (31%) of racialized teachers indicated that they were supported.

For the 28% of teachers in this subgroup who reported not having received support, 65% reported that their principals did not support them when the complaints came from parents, 44% indicated that they were not supported when the complaints came from students, and 19% reported a lack of support when the complaints came from other teachers.



I WENT THROUGH THE APPLICATION PROCESS AS AN OPENLY LESBIAN TEACHER AND I DID GET THE JOB. HOWEVER, I WAS ASKED TO CHANGE . . . MY STAFF BIO SO THAT IT WAS NOT OBVIOUS THAT I AM GAY. I GAVE THEM A MODIFIED BIO THAT REMOVED ALL REFERENCES TO MY PERSONAL LIFE RATHER THAN MASK WHO I AM, BUT I FEEL BITTERNESS BECAUSE MOST OF THE OTHER STRAIGHT TEACHERS HAVE PICTURES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THEIR FAMILY. IF MY CONTRACT GETS RENEWED . . . I WILL INSIST THAT I BE ABLE TO INCLUDE A REAL DESCRIPTION OF MY FAMILY AS WELL. . .

## Job security and job status

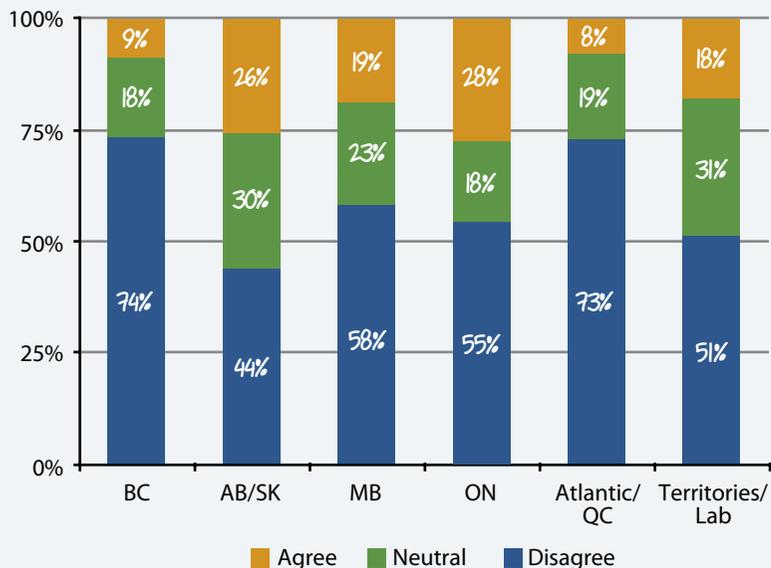
Not surprisingly, when asked what would prevent them from addressing LGBTQ issues, educators on a term contract (36%) or those who were occasional/casual employees or substitute teachers (25%) were more likely to give fear-based reasons at their schools or at the level of the administration than participants with permanent contracts (11%). For example, 28% of educators on term contracts reported that not having a permanent contract prevented them from addressing LGBTQ issues. Teachers on term contracts were also more likely to indicate that they “have more important things to worry about” (7%) than participants with permanent contracts (3%) and occasional, casual, or substitute teachers (4%). Compared to respondents with permanent contracts (15%) and occasional, casual, or substitute teachers (7%), term contract teachers were also more likely to cite worrying that parents would be opposed as a reason preventing them from addressing LGBTQ issues (22%). Teachers with term contracts expressed a similar concern that their school administration would be opposed (10% vs. 5% for teachers with permanent contracts and 2% for occasional, casual, or substitute teachers).

In response to the statement “Discussing LGBTQ issues with my students would jeopardize my job,” 62% of educators disagreed (with 48% strongly disagreeing). Even though a higher percentage of CH

respondents strongly disagreed that their jobs would be in danger (52%), over 2 in 5 (41%) LGBTQ respondents also strongly disagreed their jobs would be in danger. Overall one-fifth (21%) of educators agreed that their jobs would be in jeopardy if they discussed LGBTQ issues with students. However, 34% of LGBTQ educators agreed that their jobs would be endangered if they discussed LGBTQ issues with their students, compared to only 15% of CH educators. Interestingly, educators who opposed LGBTQ-inclusive education and those who approved of it were equally likely to agree that “Discussing LGBTQ issues with my students would jeopardize my job” (both opposed and approved reported 21% agreement, with neutral respondents slightly more likely to agree at 24%). As well, Catholic school educators were over three times more likely to feel that discussing LGBTQ issues with students would jeopardize their job (52% agree vs. 16% of secular school educators).

As shown in Figure 27, there was significant regional variation in educators’ perspectives as to whether discussing LGBTQ issues with students would jeopardize their jobs, with respondents in British Columbia (74%) and the Atlantic provinces/Québec (73%) being most likely to be confident that their jobs would not be in danger, and educators in Alberta/Saskatchewan being least likely (44%). When we looked at those who agreed that their jobs would be jeopardized, we found that educators from

**FIGURE 27: AGREEMENT THAT "DISCUSSING LGBTQ ISSUES WITH MY STUDENTS WOULD JEOPARDIZE MY JOB" (BY REGION)**



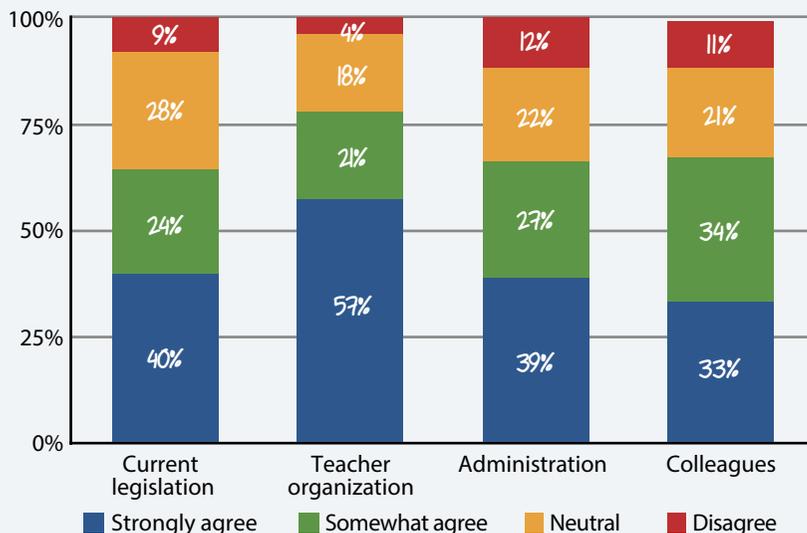
Alberta were most likely (39%), even more than those from Ontario (28%), to feel their jobs were endangered.

Alberta and Ontario are unique in Canada in having publicly funded Catholic school systems. Analyzing further, we found that participants from the Catholic school system were much more likely than those from secular schools to feel their job would be jeopardized: 55% Catholic versus 34% secular in Alberta, and 53% versus 20% in Ontario.

### Anticipated support

As shown in Figure 28, the majority of teachers anticipated they would be supported if they wanted to address LGBTQ issues in their classrooms. They were most likely to indicate that their teacher organizations would support them (78% agreed; 57% strongly agreed and 21% somewhat agreed).

**FIGURE 28: ANTICIPATED SUPPORT (BY SOURCE OF SUPPORT)**



Support from teacher organizations

Educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were more likely to be confident of receiving the support of their teacher organizations (80%) than those who were neutral (72%) or opposed (55%). Racialized participants were most likely to agree that their teacher organizations would support them (86%), followed by White educators (77%) and FNMI educators (66%). Respondents from Catholic schools were substantially less likely to agree (56%; 27% strongly agreed and 28% somewhat agreed) than educators from secular schools (82%; 63% strongly agreed and 19% somewhat agreed)

that their teacher organizations would support them. Educators whose religion opposed same-sex marriage were less likely to feel that their teacher organizations would support them (69%) than respondents whose religion either approved of same-sex marriage or took a mixed view (both 82%) or respondents who had no formal religion (82%). LGBTQ participants were somewhat more likely to agree that their teacher organization would support them (85%; 67% strongly agreed and 18% somewhat agreed) than CH educators (76%; 55% strongly agreed and 21% somewhat agreed). Further, educators from English language schools were also more likely to

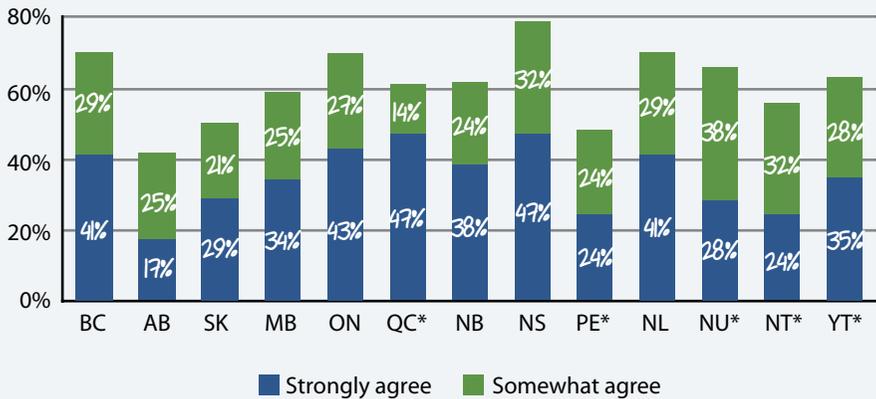
agree (80%), followed by participants who taught in mixed language English-French schools (79%), and two-thirds (65%) of those who taught in French language schools. Finally, participants from early-years schools and middle-years schools were slightly less likely to agree (74% and 75%, respectively) than those who worked with senior years (80%).

### Support from legislation

Nearly two-thirds (64%; 40% strongly and 24% somewhat) of educators agreed that current legislation within their

jurisdiction would support them if they wanted to address LGBTQ issues in their school setting (see Figure 29). Legislative reforms, such as the *Accepting Schools Act* in Ontario, *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools)* in Manitoba, the *Act to Prevent and Stop Bullying and Violence in Schools* in Québec, or the *Act to Amend the Alberta Bill of Rights to Protect Our Children* in Alberta, were either just coming into effect or were not yet introduced at the time of our survey. We expect that numbers would be higher if the survey were to be conducted again.

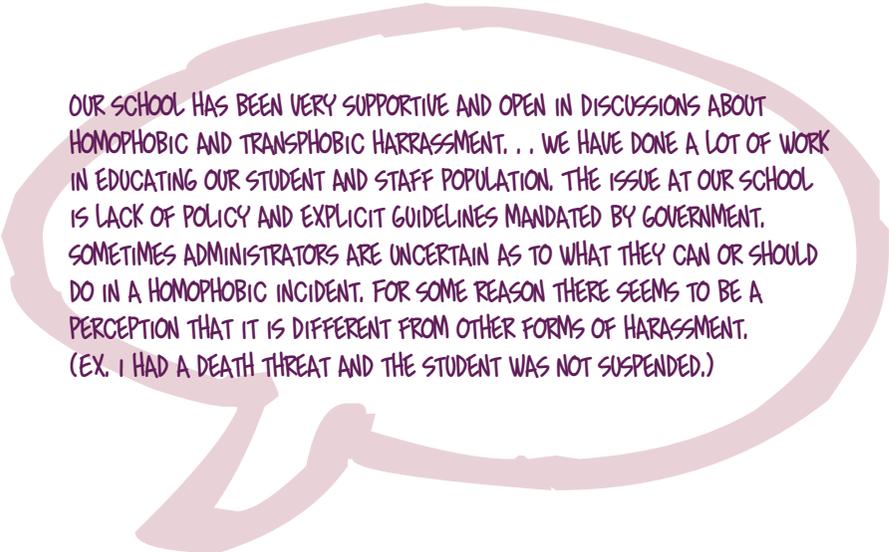
**FIGURE 29: CONFIDENCE THAT CURRENT LEGISLATION WOULD BE SUPPORTIVE (BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY)**



\*Calculations based on small sample size. Data are not weighted.

LGBTQ educators were more likely to agree (77%) than CH participants (61%) that current legislation within their jurisdiction would support them if they wanted to address LGBTQ issues in their school setting. Similarly, transgender participants (72%) and cisgender men (71%) were more likely to agree than cisgender women (61%). In terms of racial identity, FNMI educators were least likely to agree (43%), followed by White (64%) and racialized respondents (69%).

Catholic school educators were less likely to agree that current legislation within their jurisdiction would support them if they wanted to address LGBTQ issues in their school setting (51% vs. 66% from participants who worked in secular schools). Respondents who identified with a religion that supported same-sex marriage were most likely to agree (73%), followed by those whose religion had mixed views (64%) and those whose religion was generally opposed (56%). Two-thirds (67%) of those with no formal religion agreed that current legislation would support them if they wanted to address LGBTQ issues.



OUR SCHOOL HAS BEEN VERY SUPPORTIVE AND OPEN IN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC HARRASSMENT. . . WE HAVE DONE A LOT OF WORK IN EDUCATING OUR STUDENT AND STAFF POPULATION. THE ISSUE AT OUR SCHOOL IS LACK OF POLICY AND EXPLICIT GUIDELINES MANDATED BY GOVERNMENT. SOMETIMES ADMINISTRATORS ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO WHAT THEY CAN OR SHOULD DO IN A HOMOPHOBIC INCIDENT. FOR SOME REASON THERE SEEMS TO BE A PERCEPTION THAT IT IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT. (EX. I HAD A DEATH THREAT AND THE STUDENT WAS NOT SUSPENDED.)

Participants who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were also more likely to agree (67%) than those who were neutral (48%) and those opposed (38%). Educators working in French language schools were less likely to agree (54%) than those in English language schools (65%) or mixed language English-French schools (66%). Finally, those in higher grade levels were more likely to agree than those in lower levels, with two-thirds (67%) agreeing in senior years, 60% agreeing in middle years, and just over half (52%) agreeing in early years.

### Support from colleagues

Two-thirds (67%) of educators agreed either strongly (33%) or somewhat (34%) that their colleagues would support them if they wanted to address LGBTQ issues at their school. Guidance counsellors were most likely to agree (87%), followed by administrators (71%) and teachers (67%). Those who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were more likely to agree that their colleagues would support them (71%), compared to 54% who were neutral on LGBTQ-inclusive education and 36% who were opposed. Educators who currently identified with a religion that generally opposed same-sex marriage were least likely to agree (55%), while respondents with no religion were the most likely to agree (76%; with 69% for those from religions with mixed views and 68% for those from religions that generally approved of same-sex marriage). School size and grade level also affected the likelihood of educators perceiving support from their colleagues, with larger schools and senior grade levels reporting the highest confidence in the support of their colleagues. Three in five educators (62%) from schools with 250 students or fewer were confident in the support of their colleagues, 63% from schools with 251 to 500 students, two-thirds (66%) from schools with 501 to 750 students, 73% from 751 to 1000 student schools, and 78% in schools with over 1000 students. Similarly, 62% of educators working in early years were confident in receiving the support of their colleagues if they wanted to address LGBTQ issues at their school, followed by 66% from those working in middle years, and 72% from senior years.

### Support from school administration

Similar to educators' confidence in the support of their colleagues, 66% of respondents agreed that their school administration would be supportive (39% strongly agreed and 27% somewhat agreed) if they wanted to include LGBTQ issues at their school. Again, guidance counsellors were more likely to agree (86%) than fellow administrators (75%) or teachers (65%). Respondents who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education were most likely to agree that their administration would support them if they wanted to include LGBTQ issues (68%), followed by those who were neutral (58%) or opposed (42%). Educators who currently identified with a religion that generally opposed same-sex marriage were least likely to agree (52%), followed by those from a religion with mixed views on same-sex marriage (68%), those with no formal religion (73%), and those from a religion that generally approved of same-sex marriage, who were most likely to agree that their administration would support them (79%). School size was not reflected in a straightforward increase from smaller to larger schools, but educators from schools with over 1000 students were most likely to report confidence in the support of their administration (78%) and those from schools with 251-500 students least likely (59%; with 63% for those in schools of 250 students or fewer, 65% for 751-1000 student schools, and 69% for 501 to 750 students). Grade level provided steadier increases in the likelihood of educators perceiving support from their administration, with educators from senior years being most likely to report confidence in the support of their administration (72%), followed by educators from middle years (63%) and early years (59%).

WHEN WE DESIGNED ANTI-HOMOPHOBIA ACTIVITIES AS A GSA GROUP FOR TEACHERS TO IMPLEMENT, SEVERAL TEACHERS FLAT OUT REFUSED, WITHOUT ANY EXPLANATION - THEY JUST TRIED TO SLIP UNDER THE RADAR AND NOT DO IT - SO TEACHER ATTITUDES SEEMS TO BE THE BIGGEST BARRIER I HAVE ENCOUNTERED. TEACHERS ALSO SEEM TO BE VERY UNWILLING TO INTEGRATE LGBTQ VOICES INTO THEIR RESOURCES AND CURRICULUM, AND A LACK OF LEADERSHIP ON THIS MAKES THEM FEEL JUSTIFIED IN KEEPING THOSE VOICES SILENCED.

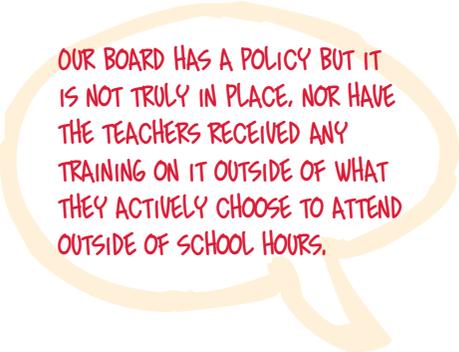
Participants from schools with homophobic harassment policies were more likely to agree that their colleagues would support them (73% agreed; 39% strongly agreed and 34% somewhat agreed) as well as their school administration (71% agreed; 46% strongly and 25% somewhat), compared to educators from schools without such policies (colleagues: 61% agreed; 26% strongly and 36% somewhat; & administration: 58% agreed; 26% strongly and 33% somewhat). A similar gap was found when we considered transphobic harassment policies. For example, 78% (45% strongly and 33% somewhat) of educators from schools with transphobic harassment policies agreed that their colleagues would be supportive, compared to 61% (26% strongly and 35% somewhat) of respondents from schools without policies. For support from administration, 77% of participants from schools with transphobic harassment policies agreed (53% strongly and 24% somewhat) versus 60% of educators from schools without policies (27% strongly and 33% somewhat).

Further, educators from Catholic schools were less likely to agree either that their colleagues (48%; 16% strongly and 33% somewhat) or their administration (36%; 14% strongly and 23% somewhat) would support them if they wanted to address LGBTQ issues in their school setting, compared to 71% (colleagues: 37% strongly agreed and 35% somewhat agreed) and 72% (administration:

43% strongly agree and 28% somewhat agree) of participants from secular schools.

### **Schools with homophobic harassment policies**

While 20% of educators did not know whether their schools had homophobic harassment policies (i.e., policies that provided guidance to school staff on how to address incidents of harassment based on sexual orientation), of the large majority who did know, 72% indicated that their schools did have such policies and 28% that their schools did not. For those educators whose schools did have homophobic harassment policies, we asked whether they felt that they had been provided with sufficient training on the policy. In response, 18% answered that they felt very well prepared, followed by 34% who felt that they were adequately prepared, and 29% who would have liked more training. Only 18% reported that they did not feel prepared or that they had not received any training.



**OUR BOARD HAS A POLICY BUT IT IS NOT TRULY IN PLACE, NOR HAVE THE TEACHERS RECEIVED ANY TRAINING ON IT OUTSIDE OF WHAT THEY ACTIVELY CHOOSE TO ATTEND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS.**

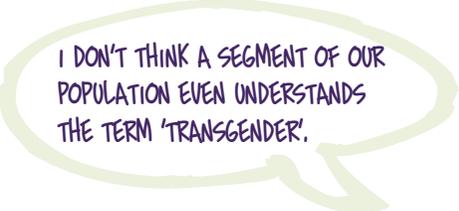
Educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies were more likely to report feeling that their school responds effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment (38%) than respondents from schools without policies (14%). In fact, 45% of participants from schools without homophobic harassment policies believed that their schools did not respond effectively, compared to only 13% of educators from schools with such policies.

Moreover, when educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies were asked if they received sufficient training on the policy, 56% of participants who reported that they were very well or adequately prepared felt that their schools responded effectively to incidents of HBTP bullying, compared to 22% of those who felt they were somewhat trained but would have liked more, and only 7% of those who did not feel like they were adequately trained or who did not receive any training at all. Only 4% of participants from schools with homophobic harassment policies who felt adequately or very well prepared reported believing that their schools did not respond effectively to HBTP incidents, compared to 14% who felt somewhat prepared but would have liked more and 40% who did not receive any training or did not feel that the training was sufficient.

Participants from schools without homophobic harassment policies were more likely to report hearing comments like “that’s

so gay” at least weekly at school (57%) than educators from schools with such policies (48%). However, our results support the principle that policies are not as effective without proper training. For example, nearly two-thirds (65%) of educators who did not feel sufficiently trained in their schools’ homophobic harassment policy reported hearing comments such as “that’s so gay” at least weekly at school, compared to 54% of those who felt somewhat prepared but would have liked more training and only 26% of educators who felt adequately or very well prepared.

### Schools with transphobic harassment policies



I DON'T THINK A SEGMENT OF OUR POPULATION EVEN UNDERSTANDS THE TERM 'TRANSGENDER'.

Not surprisingly, educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies were significantly more likely to report that their school had transphobic harassment policies (i.e., policies that provided guidance to school staff on how to address incidents of harassment based on gender identity and gender expression) as well. Fewer educators reported that their schools had transphobic harassment policies (55% “yes” and 45% “no”), and slightly more were not sure (28%)

than for homophobic harassment policies; however, those from schools with such policies reported similar opinions about the training they had received as those from schools with homophobic harassment policies. Specifically, 20% answered yes, they felt very well prepared, followed by 35% who reported yes, they felt adequately prepared, 27% who said yes, but they would have liked more training, and 19% who received no training or insufficient training.

Educators from schools with transphobic harassment policies were less likely to report hearing negative remarks about boys acting “too much like a girl” (11%) than participants from schools without such policies (19%). Similar results were found for negative remarks about girls acting “too much like a boy,” with only 5% of respondents from schools with transphobic harassment policies reporting hearing such remarks at least weekly, compared to 11% of educators from schools with no such policies.

Similar results were found for specific transphobic harassment policies, with 39% of educators from schools without policies reporting that their school did not effectively respond to incidents of harassment, compared to 9% of respondents from schools with such policies. When adequately trained, 61% of participants from schools with transphobic harassment policies reported that their school responds effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment, compared to

28% who felt they were somewhat trained but would have liked more and 11% who did not receive any training or did not feel that the training was enough. Further, only 3% of educators who were from schools with transphobic harassment policies *and* who felt that they were adequately or very well trained believed that their schools did not respond effectively to incidents of HBTP harassment, compared to 6% of educators who were trained but would have liked more and 30% who were not trained or who did not feel like they were sufficiently trained. These numbers suggest that policy is perceived as more effectively implemented in schools where it has been backed up by thorough staff training.

### **Safe schools policies**

Safe school policies provide another possible intervention to provide safety for sexual and gender minority students and staff in schools. When asked who makes decisions about the implementation of safe school policies at their school, educators reported that principals were most likely to make these decisions (80%), followed by school board or district officials (70%). Safe school committees (37%) and teachers and guidance counsellors (27%) were much less likely to have a say in safe school policy implementation.

While the numbers for principals and school board or district officials making decisions on safe school policy were generally

consistent, safe school committees and the involvement of teachers and guidance counsellors in decision-making for safe school policies varied somewhat based on the presence of other policy. For instance, the presence of homophobic harassment policy in schools also increased the likelihood that safe school committees (49%) and teachers and guidance counsellors (31%) had a role in making decisions about safe school policies, compared to schools without homophobic harassment policy (20% for both committees and teachers/counsellors).

Those participants who reported that safe school committees were involved in relevant decision-making were asked who was on the committee. Almost all respondents (91%) reported that classroom teachers were represented on their safe school committees, followed closely by principals (86%) and vice-principals (63%), and then students (34%), parents (32%), guidance counsellors (27%), with smaller numbers indicating the involvement of community members (12%), the superintendent (11%), law enforcement officers (6%), religious leaders (5%), and coaches/physical education teachers (4%).

### **Training and professional development**

In order to develop a picture about the type of training and professional development teachers receive on LGBTQ-inclusive education topics, we asked a series of questions focusing on Bachelor

of Education (B.Ed.) and student teaching experiences, professional development workshops, and post-baccalaureate courses that included LGBTQ content.

#### B.Ed. or teacher education training

On average, respondents completed their B.Ed. or teacher education program 14 years ago, with a range of less than one year ago to 45 years ago. We asked those respondents who had completed their B.Ed. degree in the last 5 years (13% of the total) a range of questions about how prepared they felt to address issues pertaining to sexual and gender diversity in schools, what kind of preparation they received on these issues, and what kind of formal instruction and informal advice they received about addressing LGBTQ issues.

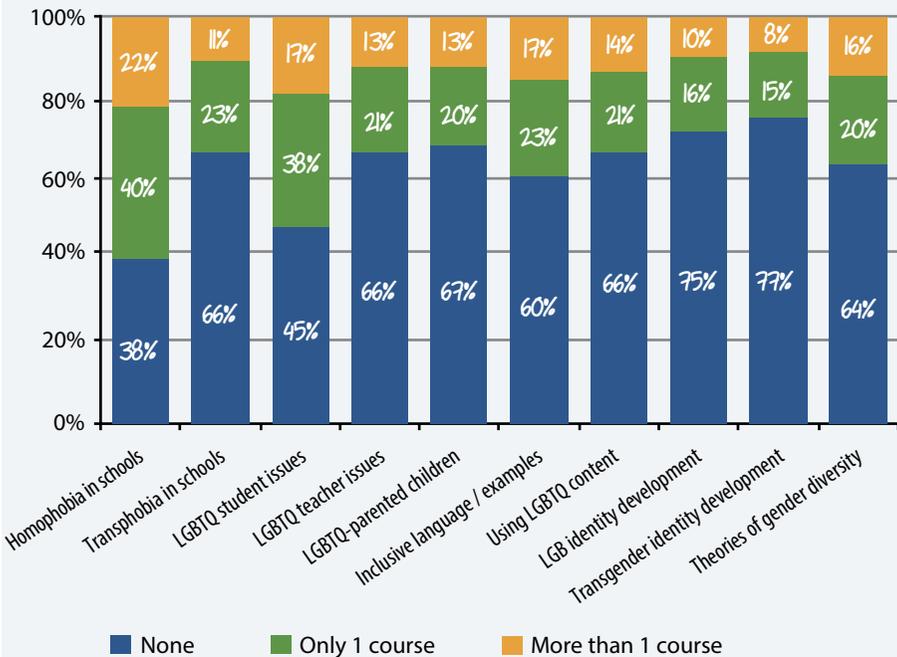
When we asked educators whether they felt that their B.Ed. program prepared them to address issues of sexual diversity in schools, 59% reported that it did not. Over a quarter of educators (26%) indicated they were prepared but would have liked further instruction, 8% felt they were adequately prepared, and only 7% believed they were very well prepared. Similarly, we asked educators whether they felt that their B.Ed. program prepared them to address issues of gender diversity in schools and found that 64% of participants felt that they were not prepared, followed by 20% who felt prepared but would have liked more, 2% who were

adequately prepared, and only 4% who felt very well prepared.

With almost two-thirds of educators not having been at all prepared for sexual and gender diversity education in their B.Ed. degrees, it is not surprising to see that educators reported that few courses, if any, incorporated various forms of LGBTQ content. As shown in Figure 30, educators were most likely to encounter content on homophobia in schools (62%, with only 22% reporting

this material appeared in more than one course). Educators were second most likely to encounter material on issues that LGBTQ students face (55%, with only 17% reporting this material appeared in more than one course). Over half of respondents reported that none of their courses incorporated LGBTQ content (except “Homophobia in schools,” for which 38% of respondents reported none, and “Issues that LGBTQ students experience” where 45% indicated none).

**FIGURE 30: NUMBER OF B.ED. COURSES WITH LGBTQ CONTENT**



We also asked educators whether they had received formal instruction from their professors about whether to address LGBTQ issues in the classroom. Three-quarters (74%) reported that they had not received any formal instruction on whether to address LGBTQ issues. However, while 14% indicated that they had been formally instructed to address LGBTQ issues any chance they had, 11% were instructed to address LGBTQ issues only if they were brought up by a student, 3% were instructed not to bring up LGBTQ issues until they had a permanent contract, and 3% reported that they had been instructed not to bring up LGBTQ issues at all (note: because students have multiple professors who can give different advice, this was a “check all that apply” question).

Since not all advice students receive occurs during formal instruction, participants were asked whether they had received informal advice from professors during their B.Ed. program about whether to address LGBTQ issues in the classroom. Nearly 3 out of 5 (59%) reported that they had not received any informal advice, while 20% were advised to address these issues any chance they had, 13% were informally instructed to address LGBTQ issues only if they were brought up by a student, 6% were told they should wait until they have a permanent contract, and 8% were advised not to bring up LGBTQ issues at all. LGBTQ educators were more likely to report that they received advice from their professors (46%) than CH

respondents (35%). Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) LGBTQ participants remembered being informally advised not to bring up LGBTQ issues at all (compared to none for CH respondents) and 13% of LGBTQ participants also indicated that they were informally advised by one of their professors not to bring up LGBTQ issues until they had a permanent contract (numbers for CH respondents were too low to report). However, the same number of LGBTQ and CH educators (19%) recalled receiving informal advice to bring up such issues any chance they.

#### Practicum and student teaching

Participants generally reported they had not received advice during their practica or student teaching experiences about whether to address LGBTQ issues in the classroom. The majority of respondents (ranging from 85% to 93%) reported they had received no advice regarding addressing LGBTQ issues during their practica from their field placement supervisor (93% reported no advice), other in-service teachers (89%), professors in their B.Ed. program (86%), cooperating teachers (90%), family members (85%), or other students in their B.Ed. program (86%). Any advice respondents received was in very small proportion (15% or less) to this overwhelming silence on the issue altogether.

However, in all instances, LGBTQ educators were more likely to have received advice and more likely to have been advised never to

bring LGBTQ issues up in class. For example, 24% of LGBTQ participants reported that they received advice from other students in their B.Ed. program, compared to 8% of CH respondents, with 8% of LGBTQ educators reporting that they were advised never to bring up LGBTQ issues, compared to less than 1% of CH participants. Further, 27% of LGBTQ respondents reported that they received advice from family members, but only 7% of CH educators received advice from their families, with 15% of LGBTQ educators reporting being advised by family members never to bring up LGBTQ issues (compared to only 1% of CH participants) and 6% being told only to bring up such issues when they had a permanent contract (compared to 1% of CH educators). Finally, 17% of LGBTQ participants received advice from a supervising teacher, compared to only 3% of CH respondents, with 5% of LGBTQ educators having been advised never to bring up LGBTQ issues (compared to 1% of CH participants) and 4% advised not to address LGBTQ issues until they had a permanent contract (compared to 1% for CH respondents).

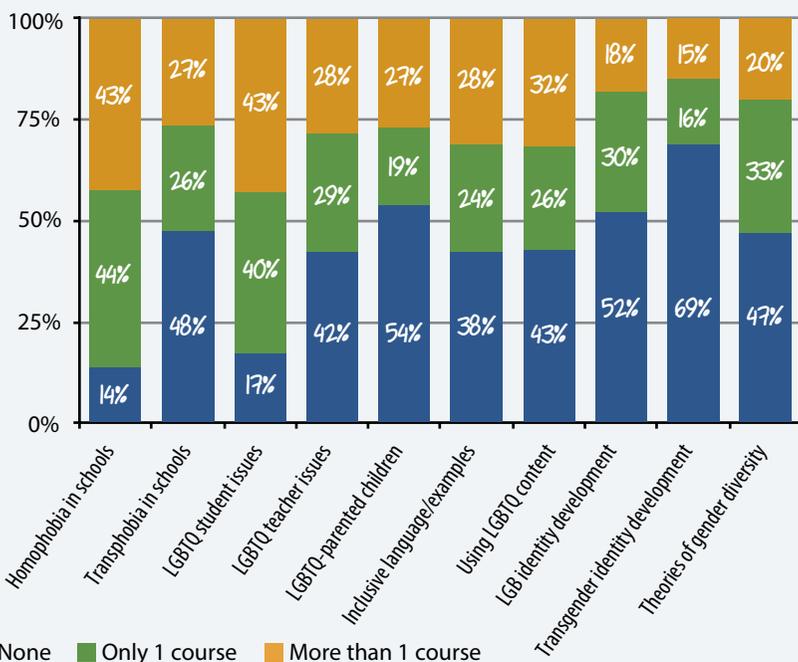
#### Graduate courses that included LGBTQ content

For those educators who pursued graduate courses for specialist certification, we asked an additional series of questions about whether their courses incorporated LGBTQ issues. When we asked participants whether they had completed any post-B.Ed.

courses that included LGBTQ content, 78% of respondents reported they had not. For those respondents who indicated that they had taken post-B.Ed. courses that included LGBTQ content (22%), we asked about the type of content incorporated.

As shown in Figure 31, educators were overall much more likely to encounter various LGBTQ content areas in their graduate courses than they had during their B.Ed. programs, perhaps because more recent courses are more likely to include LGBTQ content, and perhaps also because LGBTQ content is still seen as a specialist matter not essential to an overcrowded B.Ed. curriculum. For instance, only 14% of respondents indicated that none of their graduate courses had incorporated content on homophobia in schools, while 87% reported encountering it in one or more of their courses (43% in more than one course). Similarly, only 17% of respondents reported that none of their graduate courses included content addressing issues that LGBTQ students experience in schools, with 83% reporting encountering this topic in one or more of their courses. Notably, the content areas least likely to be incorporated are theories of transgender identity development (69% reported none of their courses included content), theories of sexual minority identity development (52% reported none), and working with children with LGBTQ parents (54% none).

**FIGURE 31: NUMBER OF GRADUATE COURSES WITH LGBTQ CONTENT**



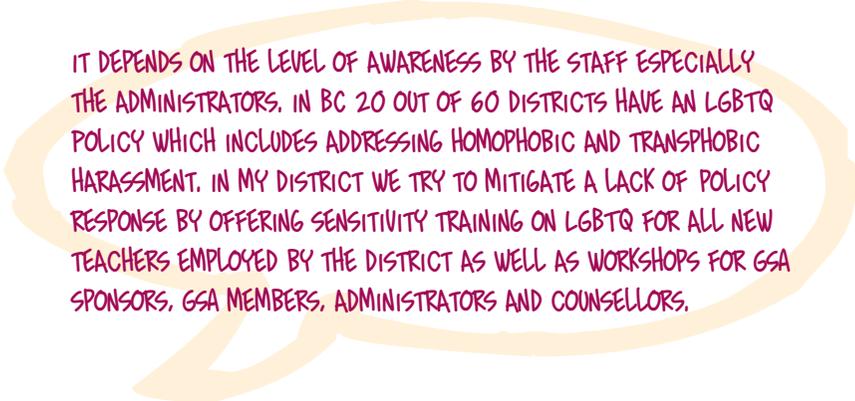
Professional development and resources offered by school or school district

When asked whether their school or school district/division offered any professional development workshops or training that addressed LGBTQ education, 13% of respondents did not know. Of those who did know, 58% reported that their school or school district had not offered any workshops or training on LGBTQ education, while 9% reported that their school or school district had

offered a mandatory workshop or training that they were required to attend. Almost one-quarter (24%) reported they had been invited to attend the workshop and did, while 8% said they were invited but unable to attend and 2% chose not to attend.

In total, then, 32% of respondents attended some kind of professional development workshop or training offered by their school or school district that addressed LGBTQ education, either because they were

required to attend or because they were invited and chose to attend. LGBTQ educators were more likely to have attended school or school district training on LGBTQ education (40%) than CH educators (28%). Transgender respondents were also more likely to have attended training (41%) than either cisgender men or cisgender women (34% and 32% respectively). Guidance counsellors were most likely to have attended (53%), followed closely by administrators (47%), while less than a third (31%) of teachers reported that they attended a workshop or training. Religious beliefs also affected the likelihood of educators attending workshops or training on LGBTQ education, with those identifying with a religion that approved of same-sex marriage being much more likely to attend (44%) than those from a religion with mixed views on same-sex marriage (25%) or those whose religion generally disapproved of same-sex marriage (18%); 43% of respondents with no formal religion reported attending.



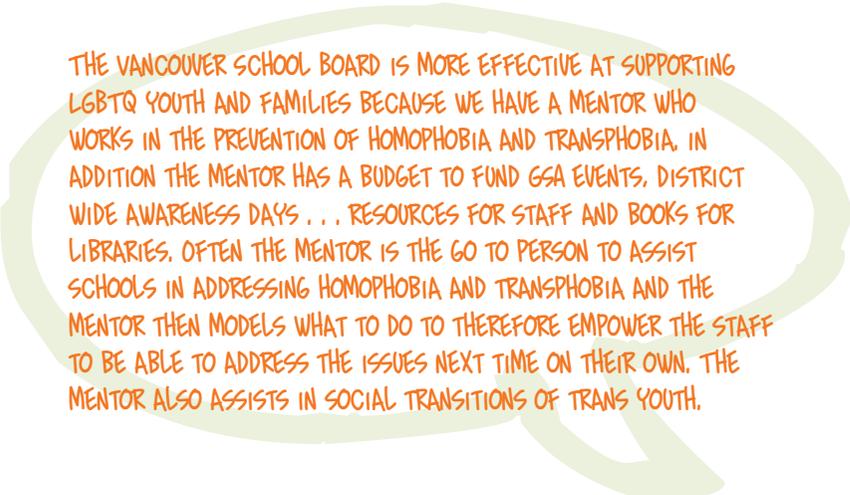
IT DEPENDS ON THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS BY THE STAFF ESPECIALLY THE ADMINISTRATORS. IN BC 20 OUT OF 60 DISTRICTS HAVE AN LGBTQ POLICY WHICH INCLUDES ADDRESSING HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC HARASSMENT. IN MY DISTRICT WE TRY TO MITIGATE A LACK OF POLICY RESPONSE BY OFFERING SENSITIVITY TRAINING ON LGBTQ FOR ALL NEW TEACHERS EMPLOYED BY THE DISTRICT AS WELL AS WORKSHOPS FOR GSA SPONSORS, GSA MEMBERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND COUNSELLORS.

Our analysis of various school contexts identified further differences in the number of educators who reported having attended professional development on LGBTQ education offered by their school or school district. For instance, only 6% of educators from French language schools reported having attended, compared to 35% from English language schools and 34% from mixed French and English language schools. Respondents from schools with homophobic harassment policy were far more likely to have

attended (45%) than those from schools without homophobic harassment policy (14%). Similarly, educators from schools with transphobic harassment policy were much more likely to have attended workshops or training on LGBTQ education (47%) than those from schools without transphobic harassment policy (23%). Catholic school educators were much less likely to have attended school or school district workshops or training on LGBTQ education (20%) than secular school educators (35%).

Overall, respondents reported that school or school district training on LGBTQ education had taken place fairly recently, with 43% of educators reporting that the workshop or training had occurred within the last year. On average, workshops or training had been most recently offered within the past 2 years (average 1.8 years, median=1 year).

We also asked educators whether their school district had a resource person who specialized (at least in part) in LGBTQ issues. One in five (21%) did not know whether their district had such a resource person. Of the respondents who did know, 2 in 5 (41%) indicated that their district did not have a resource person specializing in LGBTQ issues. Over half (53%) reported that their school district did have such a resource person, but 31% reported that they had never consulted them, while 22% indicated that they had.



THE VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD IS MORE EFFECTIVE AT SUPPORTING LGBTQ YOUTH AND FAMILIES BECAUSE WE HAVE A MENTOR WHO WORKS IN THE PREVENTION OF HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA. IN ADDITION THE MENTOR HAS A BUDGET TO FUND GSA EVENTS, DISTRICT WIDE AWARENESS DAYS . . . RESOURCES FOR STAFF AND BOOKS FOR LIBRARIES. OFTEN THE MENTOR IS THE GO TO PERSON TO ASSIST SCHOOLS IN ADDRESSING HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA AND THE MENTOR THEN MODELS WHAT TO DO TO THEREFORE EMPOWER THE STAFF TO BE ABLE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES NEXT TIME ON THEIR OWN. THE MENTOR ALSO ASSISTS IN SOCIAL TRANSITIONS OF TRANS YOUTH.

Two-thirds (67%) of respondents from schools with homophobic harassment policy and almost three-quarters (74%) of those from schools with transphobic harassment policy reported having a resource person specializing in LGBTQ issues (compared to 32% for those from schools without homophobic harassment policy and 34% without transphobic harassment policy). Educators from Catholic schools were far less likely to have a resource person available through their school district (15%) than those working in secular schools (59%).

#### Professional development and resources offered by teacher organizations

Teacher organizations offer support in various ways, including professional development workshops and training on LGBTQ content, action committees or cohorts dedicated to LGBTQ issues, and designated resource people and materials on LGBTQ content. In the long form of the survey, we asked educators about their teacher organization's offerings.

The majority (61%) of educators reported that their local or provincial/territorial teacher organization held professional development workshops or training that addressed LGBTQ education. Over half of those educators (32%) reported they had attended this training, while 16% were invited but unable to attend and 13% were invited but chose not to

attend. LGBTQ educators were somewhat more likely to be aware that their local or provincial/territorial teacher organization had held such training (66% vs. 59% of CH respondents) and far more likely to have attended it (46% vs. 25% CH). Transgender participants were much more likely to have attended a training session on LGBTQ education offered by their local or provincial/territorial teacher organization (70%) than either cisgender men (37%) or cisgender women (29%). Additionally, transgender participants were somewhat more likely (70%) to be aware of such training being offered by their teacher organization than either cisgender men (62%) or cisgender women (61%). Racialized educators were more likely to be aware that their teacher organization had a workshop or training session (74%) than either White (61%) or FNMI (55%) educators, but there was no significant difference on attendance rates based on racialized identity.

Educators whose current religion approves of same-sex marriage were more likely again to be aware that their teacher organization had held workshops or training on LGBTQ education (83%) and also more likely to have attended (53%). Those whose religion holds mixed views on same-sex marriage were somewhat less likely to be aware of training (68%) and far less likely to have attended (15%). While the number of educators whose religion is generally opposed to same-sex marriage is lower

when it comes to awareness of PD offered by their teacher organization (48%), one-third (34%) reported having attended a workshop or training session.

When we looked at the type of religious tradition with which educators identified, we found additional differences. For instance, while Catholic participants were less likely than those from Protestant traditions (49% vs. 66%) to report professional development workshops or training offered by their teacher organization, Catholic respondents were more likely to have attended (35% attended) than Protestant participants (17% attended). Further, we were able to compare the numbers from educators who worked in Catholic schools with those who worked in secular schools. Catholic school educators were less likely than secular school educators to report that their teacher organization offered professional development workshops or training (45% vs. 64%), though they were only slightly less likely to attend (29% vs. 32% attended).

When we asked educators if their teacher organization had committees or cohorts dedicated to LGBTQ issues, 22% of respondents did not know. Of those who knew, over one-third (36%) reported that their teacher organization did not have a committee on LGBTQ issues, while 64% indicated that it did (with 31% having consulted it, and 33% having not consulted it). Guidance counsellors were more likely to

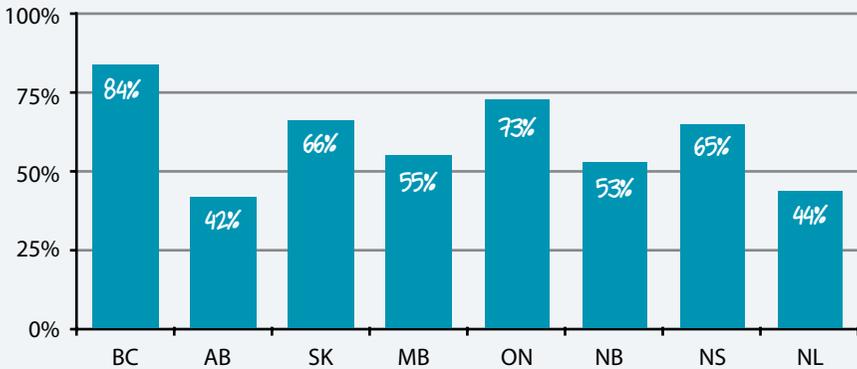
be aware that teacher organizations had a committee or cohort on LGBTQ issues (80%) than either teachers (67%) or administrators (74%). Educators who worked in Catholic schools were much less likely to be aware of whether their teacher organization had a committee on LGBTQ issues (32%) than respondents working in secular schools (75%).

Educators whose current religion generally approved of same-sex marriage were more likely to report that their teacher organization had a committee or cohort focused on LGBTQ issues (85%) than respondents identifying with a religion that had mixed views on same-sex marriage (76%), those with no formal religion (75%), or those whose religion was generally opposed to same-sex marriage (50%).

As shown in Figure 32, regionally, educators in British Columbia were most likely to believe their teacher organization had committees or cohorts on LGBTQ issues (84%), followed by Ontario (73%), Saskatchewan (66%), Nova Scotia (65%), Manitoba (55%), New Brunswick (53%), Newfoundland & Labrador (44%), and Alberta (42%). (Note: Too few responses to report on Québec, PEI, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.)

We also asked respondents if their local or provincial/territorial teacher organization had a resource person or staff member specializing in LGBTQ issues (see Figure 33 for

**FIGURE 32: AWARENESS OF TEACHER ORGANIZATION COMMITTEES OR COHORTS ON LGBTQ ISSUES (BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY)**



*\*Note: Too few cases to report on Québec, PEI, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.*

regional analysis). One in five (19%) educators did not know and, of those who did know, 64% reported that there was a person available (with 31% responding that they had consulted this resource person, and 33% indicating they had not).

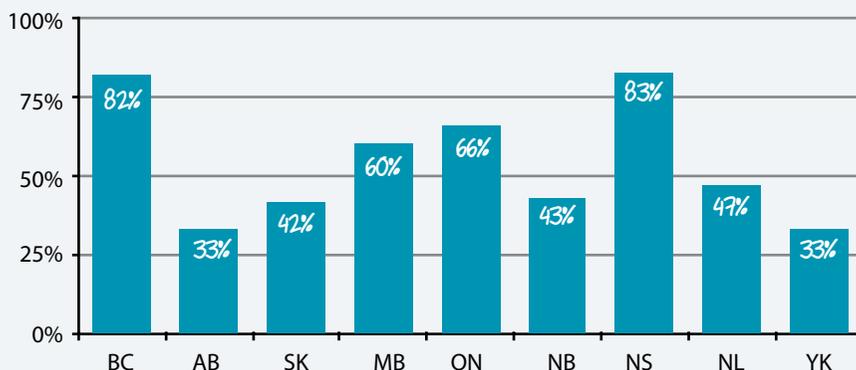
Again, we found that educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies were more likely to be aware that their teacher organization had a resource person available (72% of those who knew) than those from a school without homophobic harassment policies (52%). Similarly, respondents from schools with

transphobic harassment policy were more likely to be aware (76%) than those from schools without transphobic harassment policy (55%). As well, Catholic school educators were again less likely to report the availability of a teacher organization resource person specializing in LGBTQ issues, with only 32% reporting they knew of such a person, compared to 69% of educators from secular schools.

#### Other available resources

We also asked educators about other resources on LGBTQ education that they had access to and had used, whether these

**FIGURE 33: AWARENESS OF TEACHER ORGANIZATION RESOURCE STAFF FOCUSED ON LGBTQ ISSUES (BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY)**



*\*Note: Too few cases to report on Québec, PEI, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.*

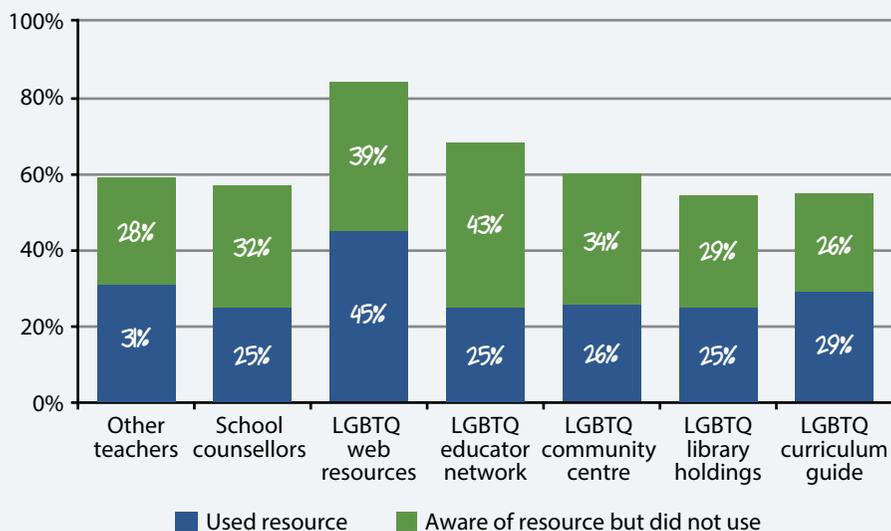
resources were other experienced teachers, online or community resources, educators' networks, or simply library or curriculum materials. Roughly 1 in 5 educators (ranging from 15% to 22%) reported they did not know of these resources. The numbers presented in this section are based on the total number of respondents who did know of these resources.

As shown in Figure 34, educators were most likely to be aware of LGBTQ web resources (83%) and most likely to use them (45%). While respondents were less likely to be aware of other teachers with training in LGBTQ education (59%) than

LGBTQ educators' networks (67%) or LGBTQ community centres (60%), they were more likely to consult other teachers with training in LGBTQ education (31%) than they were to turn to educator networks (25%) or community centres (26%).

Educators from Catholic schools were less likely to be aware of resources or to use the resources available to them. For instance, while 64% of Catholic school educators were aware of LGBTQ web resources, only 29% reported having used them, compared to 87% of secular school educators being aware of LGBTQ web resources and 49% having used them. Similarly, 27% of Catholic

**FIGURE 34: AWARENESS AND USE OF OTHER RESOURCES ON LGBTQ EDUCATION**



school educators were aware of a guidance counsellor with training in LGBTQ issues and 16% having consulted with them, compared to 62% of secular school educators and 26% having consulted them.

The numbers were similar for educators who worked with younger children, with educators working with early years being less likely to be aware of LGBTQ resources and less likely to use them. For instance, 72% of educators working with early years were aware of web-based resources (32% used them), compared to 82% of educators from

middle years (42% used them) and 87% of senior-years educators (49% used them). Educators working with early years were also less likely to be aware of LGBTQ curriculum guides (50% aware, 25% used them) and LGBTQ library holdings (48% aware, 20% used them) than educators working in middle years (56% aware of curriculum guides, 30% used them; 52% aware of library holdings, 24% used them) and those working in senior years (55% aware of curriculum guides, 28% used them; 54% aware of library holdings, 24% used them).

## Perceived value of school system interventions for LGBTQ students

When we asked educators what efforts would be helpful in creating safer schools for LGBTQ students, respondents indicated showing clear administrative and institutional support for LGBTQ inclusion would be the most helpful in creating safer schools. As shown in Figure 35, respondents reported that establishing safe spaces and having an ally on staff that students could talk to would be the most helpful (84% very helpful, 14% somewhat), followed by having a principal or superintendent who openly supports teachers who take action on LGBTQ issues (81% very helpful, 14% somewhat), respectful inclusion in schools (79% very helpful, 18% somewhat helpful) and respectful inclusion of LGBTQ content in the curriculum (78% very helpful, 18% somewhat helpful). In terms of inclusive efforts, educators showed the lowest levels of support for anti-transphobia curriculum (54% very helpful, 31% somewhat helpful), which suggests that there is a need for more awareness of the impact of transphobia on students. Interestingly, given the extent to which both interventions have been relied on in some regions, GSA clubs scored among the least helpful inclusive efforts (63% very helpful, 23% somewhat helpful), followed by zero-tolerance policies (68% very helpful, 19% somewhat helpful). This suggests that educators see more value in

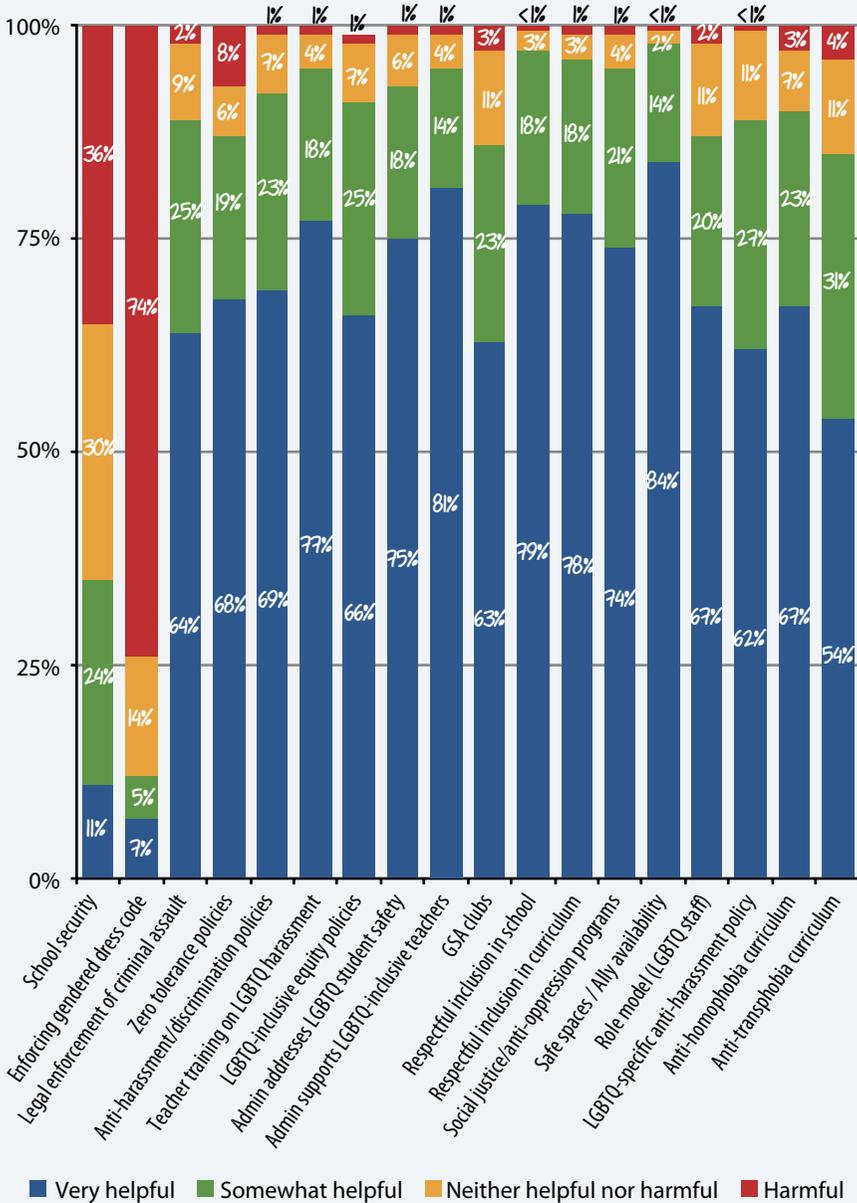
broad-based interventions (and perhaps that some see GSAs as narrower in effect than they actually are).

According to participants, the most harmful efforts in attempting to create safer school environments for LGBTQ students involved the regulation of behaviour and security measures. For instance, three-quarters (74%) reported that enforcing conventional gender dress codes would be harmful, with only 12% reporting this helpful. Over a third (36%) reported that an increased emphasis on school security would be harmful (with 35% finding this effort potentially helpful). The one exception to this trend toward inclusion can be found in participants' strong support for the legal enforcement of punishment for criminal assaults (with 64% finding this effort very helpful and 25% somewhat helpful), though this is likely due to the extreme nature of these types of assaults.

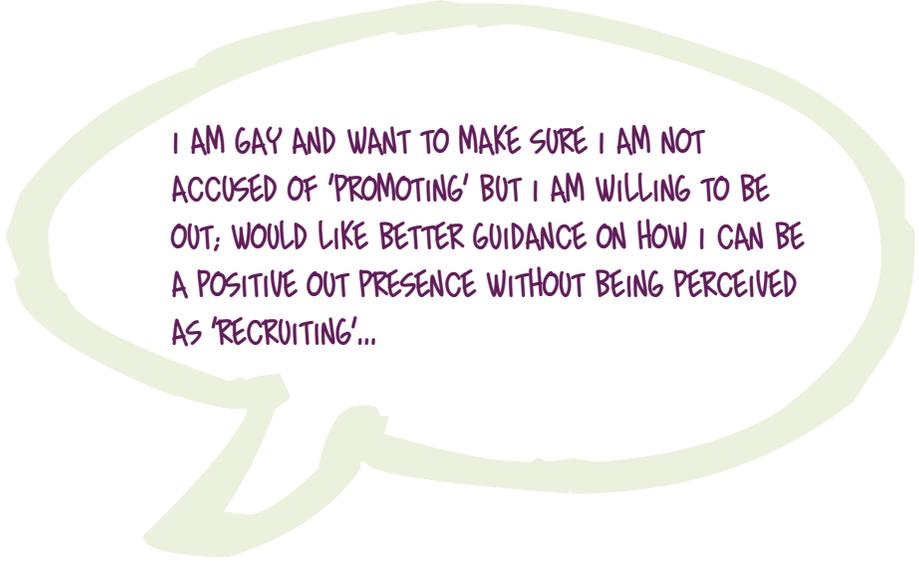
LGBTQ respondents were much more likely than CH educators to see value in various efforts to make schools safer for LGBTQ students. Specifically, LGBTQ respondents reported the following actions would be "very helpful" in making schools safer at higher rates than CH respondents:

- ⇒ a principal and/or superintendent who supported teachers who took action on LGBTQ issues (92% vs. 75% of CH participants);

FIGURE 35: PERCEIVED VALUE OF SCHOOL SYSTEM INTERVENTIONS FOR LGBTQ STUDENTS



- ⇒ a principal and/or superintendent who openly addressed safety issues for LGBTQ students (93% vs. 67% CH);
- ⇒ respectful inclusion in the curriculum (92% vs. 71% CH);
- ⇒ teacher training on dealing with LGBTQ harassment in schools (91% vs. 71% CH);
- ⇒ respectful inclusion in the school community, school clubs, and events (90% vs. 74% CH);
- ⇒ social justice or anti-oppression curriculum and programming (86% vs. 69% CH);
- ⇒ role models such as LGBTQ staff members (85% vs. 60% CH);
- ⇒ anti-harassment/anti-discrimination policies that protect LGBTQ students (84% vs. 63% CH);
- ⇒ anti-homophobia curriculum (85% vs. 59% CH);
- ⇒ LGBTQ-inclusive equity policies (80% vs. 60% CH);
- ⇒ GSA clubs (77% vs. 57% CH);
- ⇒ LGBTQ-specific anti-harassment policies (77% vs. 55% CH); and
- ⇒ anti-transphobia curriculum (77% vs. only 43% of CH educators).



I AM GAY AND WANT TO MAKE SURE I AM NOT ACCUSED OF 'PROMOTING' BUT I AM WILLING TO BE OUT; WOULD LIKE BETTER GUIDANCE ON HOW I CAN BE A POSITIVE OUT PRESENCE WITHOUT BEING PERCEIVED AS 'RECRUITING'...

Cisgender women were more likely to report that legal enforcement of criminal assaults was very helpful (68%) than cisgender men (55%) or transgender participants (58%). Similarly, 71% of cisgender women reported zero-tolerance bullying policies to be very helpful, followed by 62% of cisgender men and 46% of transgender participants.

There were some variations in the numbers based on the role of respondents in their schools. Specifically, teachers were more likely than guidance counsellors or administrators to feel that the following forms of curriculum would be very helpful in creating safer schools for LGBTQ students:

- ⇒ social justice or anti-oppression curriculum and programming (74% vs. 65% of guidance counsellors and 66% of administrators);
- ⇒ anti-homophobia curriculum (67% vs. 63% of guidance counsellors and 60% of administrators); and
- ⇒ anti-transphobia curriculum (55% vs. 53% of guidance counsellors and 46% of administrators).

Guidance counsellors were most likely to report that GSA clubs (82%) and LGBTQ-specific anti-harassment policies (70%) would be very helpful, compared to teachers (62% and 61% respectively) and administrators (71% and 55% respectively). When it came to teacher training dealing with LGBTQ harassment in schools, there was little

difference between teachers, guidance counsellors, and administrators (78%, 75%, and 74% respectively), which indicates that no matter what their professional role, the majority of educators want this type of training.

Further, educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies were generally more likely to find inclusive efforts to be very helpful in creating safer schools for LGBTQ students. For instance, respondents from schools with homophobic harassment policies were more likely to find anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies that protect LGBTQ students very helpful (72% vs. 63% from schools without policy), along with GSA clubs (70% vs. 56% from schools without policy) and respectful inclusion in the school community and school clubs and events (83% vs. 71% from schools without policy).

Similarly, educators from schools with transphobic harassment policies were generally more likely to find inclusive efforts helpful than those from schools without it. Whereas there was no difference between educators from schools with homophobic harassment policies and those without such policies, educators from schools with transphobic harassment policies were more likely than those from schools without such policies to recognize the importance of LGBTQ-inclusive equity policies (74% with policies vs. 61% without), possibly because

transgender issues were often ignored in more generic policies or because educators recognize the capability of policy to raise awareness and create safer schools. Similarly, educators from schools with transphobic harassment policies were also more likely to feel that respectful inclusion of LGBTQ students in the school community and its clubs and events would be helpful in creating a safer school environment for LGBTQ students (85% with policies vs. 73% without).

Not surprisingly, educators from schools that currently had a GSA were more likely to recognize the helpfulness of GSA clubs in creating safer schools for LGBTQ students (79% vs. 58% for those from schools without a GSA). Respondents from schools with GSAs were also more likely to find it helpful to have safe spaces or teacher/counsellor allies that students could talk to (91%) and to have role models, such as LGBTQ staff members (76%), than those from schools without GSAs (81% and 65% respectively). It seems that educators from schools with a GSA club were more aware of the role that safe spaces and sympathetic adult influences can have in creating safe schools for LGBTQ students.

Educators who were supportive of LGBTQ-inclusive education were consistently much more likely to report various efforts to be very helpful than those who were neutral or opposed to LGBTQ-inclusive education. For instance, 72% of those who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education reported that

anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies that protect LGBTQ students would be very helpful, compared to 29% of those who were neutral and only 15% of those who opposed. Similarly, 82% of educators who approved of LGBTQ-inclusive education thought that it would be very helpful to have teacher training dealing with LGBTQ harassment in schools (compared to 21% of those who were neutral and <5 cases of those opposed) and 70% found it potentially very helpful to have LGBTQ-inclusive equity policies (compared to 21% neutral and <5 cases for those opposed).

Finally, there was little difference between what Catholic school educators considered to be very helpful efforts in creating safer schools for LGBTQ students and what educators from secular schools reported. For instance, Catholic school and secular school educators were similarly likely to report that the following efforts would be very helpful:

- ⇒ LGBTQ-inclusive equity policies (62% vs. 67% of secular school educators);
- ⇒ having a principal and/or superintendent who supports teachers taking action on LGBTQ issues (78% vs. 81% of secular school educators);
- ⇒ GSA clubs (65% vs. 63% of secular school educators);
- ⇒ respectful inclusion in the school community and school clubs and

events (79% vs. 79% of secular school educators);

- ⇒ respectful inclusion in the curriculum (73% vs. 79% of secular school educators);
- ⇒ safe spaces or a teacher/counsellor ally students could talk to (84% vs. 84% of secular school educators); and
- ⇒ LGBTQ-specific anti-harassment policies (63% vs. 61% of secular school educators).

The biggest difference between Catholic school educators and those from secular schools was in their likelihood of finding it helpful to enforce conventional gender dress codes (15% of Catholic school educators reported it would be very helpful vs. 6% of secular school educators); this difference may be due to the increased likelihood of Catholic school educators working in schools that already enforce a dress code, which may increase their assessment of its helpfulness. The lack of significant differences between educators in Catholic schools and those in secular schools shows that Catholic school educators are also looking for leadership on LGBTQ education and for opportunities to take part in efforts to create safer schools for LGBTQ students.

# [CONCLUSION]

**T**eachers understand that safety requires inclusion. In some jurisdictions, especially in the past, school officials more narrowly focused system interventions on anti-harassment measures, or even on mere (often half-heartedly implemented) policy that equated safety with security and control of the school environment in which the students themselves were perceived as the greatest threat to school safety. In the late 1990s, following school shootings at Columbine in the United States and in Taber, Alberta, an emphasis on violent, criminal acts in discussions about school safety took root which ignored broader configurations of safety in which equity and inclusion could be given prominence. Conversations about school safety, then, became stalled in talk of extreme school violence and zero-tolerance policies.

Times have changed. Now it has become more common to find officials and politicians presenting student safety in terms of inclusion. For example, Manitoba's *Bill 18, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools)*, uses the language of inclusion side by side with safety to signify that the two are mutually dependent. The tremendous support for the Every Teacher Project from teacher organizations shows that they support LGBTQ-inclusive education. The results of the Every Teacher Project demonstrate that a great many teachers across the country are supportive as well. One large challenge arising from this survey data is the question of what needs to be done to increase the level of LGBTQ-inclusive practices to match the level of educator approval for LGBTQ-inclusive education. What is holding educators back from acting on their LGBTQ-inclusive values, and how can we support them in their efforts?

Media characterization of LGBTQ-inclusive school efforts tends to portray a conflict between religious faith and LGBTQ inclusion, as though the two forces are always mutually opposed. School officials and legislators need to know that there is strong support for LGBTQ inclusion from Canada's teachers, including a great many teachers in Canada's Catholic schools. Teachers across the country have told the Every Teacher Project that they are ready for LGBTQ-inclusive education. They approve of it, they feel comfortable about doing it, and they know that it is much needed.

But they are being held back by fears that they will not be supported and lack the training to do it properly. What we have learned in the Every Teacher Project is that for most teachers, it is lack of training and fear of backlash that prevents them from doing their jobs, not, as is often assumed, religious belief or moral conflict. There has been great progress in recent years in many schools across the country, from big metropolitan cities to small remote towns, but a great many more have not even begun to address the exclusion of LGBTQ students and staff from safe and meaningful participation in everyday life at school. Lack of action on this issue is leaving far too many young people trapped in hostile school climates that run the gamut, as was shown in the First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in Canadian Schools, from demoralizing to deadly. The following recommendations arise from the findings of the Every Teacher Project. They address the work still needed to allay educators' fears and build much-needed system capacity to make all of Canada's schools inclusive and safe for every student.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

### FOR GOVERNMENT AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

- 1. Provide teachers and counsellors with clear, effectively communicated assurance of support for LGBTQ-inclusive education from every level of the school system,** including school officials, school district administration and the Ministry of Education. The results show that participants were not strongly confident that school system leadership would support them in the event of complaints, and many participants were not confident at all. Support for teacher-leaders who take the initiative to include LGBTQ-inclusive course content is particularly important.
- 2. Develop LGBTQ-specific legislation and district policy that address both meaningful inclusion and personal safety.** We found that teachers strongly support LGBTQ-inclusive education and see school safety as requiring meaningful inclusion in school

life. A number of provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario) now have legislation requiring schools to provide GSAs when requested by students or teachers. We recommend that all provinces and territories amend their education statutes to include requirements for LGBTQ-inclusive education, that go beyond GSAs and anti-harassment policies, in all publicly funded schools.

- 3. Develop appropriate curricular content at all grade levels and provide teachers with support to implement it. Make LGBTQ-inclusive content mandatory.**
- 4. Develop and implement intervention policy to respond to teachers who contribute to a hostile school climate by making inaccurate and pejorative representations of LGBTQ people in public or in interactions with students.** These plans should detail the disciplinary consequences for continuing to make such comments.
- 5. Provide curriculum resources from K through 12.** Teachers identified lack of knowledge and resources as an impediment to practicing LGBTQ-inclusive education. A great many resources created by publishers, school divisions, LGBTQ advocacy groups (Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network, Human Rights Campaign, Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, and Pride Education Network), and teacher organizations already exist, but our results show that many teachers are not aware of them.
- 6. Provide LGBTQ-inclusive education professional development and pay particular attention to the situation of transgender students in all LGBTQ-inclusive professional development.** The student Climate Survey showed that transgender students are even more likely to be harassed and feel unsafe at school than LGB students; the Every Teacher survey showed that most teachers felt that transgender students would not feel safe in their schools.

- 7. Develop legislation/school board policy to require all publicly funded schools to provide a Gay-Straight Alliance (or equivalent club) if requested by students and resource it at a level commensurate with other student clubs.** If there is no appropriate staff member to facilitate the club, professional development should be offered to some or all school staff to develop the requisite capacity.

#### **FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS:**

- 1. Ensure that teachers, counsellors and administrators are aware of current legislation and school district policy, and receive thorough training in it.**
- 2. Help students form a Gay-Straight Alliance on site.**
- 3. Use inclusive language that communicates that LGBTQ staff and family members are welcome** and integrate them equitably into school life.
- 4. Provide professional development opportunities on LGBTQ-inclusive education,** and especially on gender diversity and support for transitioning students.
- 5. Make support for LGBTQ inclusion visible** by posting and updating displays (bulletin boards, library books, themed events), resources (books, posters, flyers, pamphlets), and policies.
- 6. Create opportunities for teachers to dialogue.** While knowledge and resources are important, it is equally important for teachers to process any fears and misgivings they might have, overcome the traditional isolation of teachers doing this work, and develop courage from knowing that their colleagues approve of LGBTQ-inclusive education and would support them if there were complaints.
- 7. Provide clear support for LGBTQ-inclusive classroom practices, including professional development and resources.**

## FOR TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Teacher organizations represent a broad-based national network that has the professional capacity to mobilize existing support among Canada's teachers, provide professional development to increase that support, and work with their membership to support LGBTQ-inclusive initiatives from school systems and government.

- 1. Actively work with Ministries of Education to create and implement effective legislation supporting LGBTQ-inclusive education.** Teacher organization members have made it clear that they support this work but they need strong leadership to be demonstrated at all levels of the education system.
- 2. Actively support school districts to create and implement effective policies supporting LGBTQ-inclusive education.**
- 3. Do effective outreach to stakeholders to confirm and clarify their support (and any limits of support) for members who do this work and for LGBTQ educators in particular.** We found that even in provinces where teacher organizations are very strongly supportive, confidence in that support was around 70%.
- 4. Develop and implement intervention plans to respond to teachers who contribute to a hostile school climate for LGBTQ staff and students.**
- 5. Develop a GSA or equivalent for members.**

## FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

- 1. Ensure that student coursework has LGBTQ content** integrated throughout Bachelor of Education programs.
- 2. Provide post-baccalaureate and graduate courses on LGBTQ-inclusive education for the benefit of educators already in the system.**
- 3. Provide opportunities for faculty and field supervisors to learn and discuss how LGBTQ content can be incorporated in courses and field experiences.**

4. **Work with ministries, school districts, and teacher organizations to ensure provincial and territorial curriculum standards include gender and sexual diversity in all grades and content areas.**
5. **Provide leadership for local school districts and communities by publicly endorsing LGBTQ-inclusive education and new legislation.**
6. **Develop a GSA for Education students.**

#### **FOR ALL SCHOOL SYSTEM EMPLOYERS:**

1. **Build system capacity by identifying expertise in LGBTQ-inclusive education as an asset in candidates for educator and school official positions,** and actively encourage individuals with such expertise to apply.
2. **Include LGBTQ persons in the list of members of groups whose members are particularly encouraged to apply.** This would involve following the practice of including “LGBTQ persons” alongside women and visible minorities in advertisements for school system positions. It is important for LGBTQ students to have role models of successful, respected LGBTQ adults and for other students to see that successful, respected people are LGBTQ. Our results show that LGBTQ teachers were generally not “out” to school officials when they applied for their jobs and out to only a small number of trusted colleagues and administrators afterwards.
3. **Provide official support at every level for teachers’ right to identify openly as LGBTQ** at work so that they can be role models for LGBTQ students and educate other students and colleagues. The situation reported by LGBTQ participants that they only knew a few individuals at their school who were LGBTQ sends the message that LGBTQ people are not fully welcome at school.
4. **Ensure that LGBTQ employees are treated equitably in all respects.** For example, provide full entitlement to spousal benefits for partners of LGBTQ employees at a level consistent with the terms and conditions of all other spousal benefits.

## FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS:

- 1. Reconceptualize the common misconception of LGBTQ inclusion as a battle between religious faith and LGBTQ rights.**

Many religious teachers, including many religious conservative teachers, not only support LGBTQ-inclusive education, but they practice it. Many others would like to do so.
- 2. Create opportunities for those teachers who oppose LGBTQ inclusion on religious grounds to realize that LGBTQ students have a right to a safe and inclusive education.** The fact that LGBTQ rights sometimes conflict with religious rights does not extinguish teachers' right to maintain personal religious beliefs that same-sex relationships and gender diversity are wrong, but neither does it extinguish LGBTQ students' right to be safe, respected and included at school.
- 3. Encourage religious leaders and other people of faith to be more outspoken about their support for LGBTQ-inclusive education.**
- 4. Provide support at every level for teachers' efforts to practice LGBTQ-inclusive education in publicly funded secular and religious schools.**

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⇒ Bill 44 legislation can be found here: [http://www.assembly.ab.ca/ISYS/LADDAR\\_files/docs/bills/bill/legislature\\_27/session\\_2/20090210\\_bill-044.pdf](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/ISYS/LADDAR_files/docs/bills/bill/legislature_27/session_2/20090210_bill-044.pdf); Bill 10 legislation can be found here: [http://www.assembly.ab.ca/ISYS/LADDAR\\_files/docs/bills/bill/legislature\\_28/session\\_3/20141117\\_bill-010.pdf](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/ISYS/LADDAR_files/docs/bills/bill/legislature_28/session_3/20141117_bill-010.pdf)

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⇒ Bill 18 legislation can be found here: <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/40-2/pdf/b018.pdf>

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The  
Manitoba  
Teachers'  
Society

## **Inclusive Presentation**

This presentation was created by Nichelle Penney for small group delivery. Run time is approximately 45 minutes

### **Lesson Plan:**

1. Write LGBTQ2S on the board.
  - a. Ask participants to show of hands how many people think they know what the L stands for.
  - b. Tell participants that we are going to say the words out loud together at a count of three. Ensure that everyone shouts out “Lesbian,” “Gay,” “Bisexual,” “Trans(gender),” and “Queer / Questioning.”
  - c. Now that all terms have been said out loud, ask if anyone knows what the 2S stands for - give a few seconds, but if no one knows, indicate what the term is
  
2. Explore definitions
  - a. Go through LGBTQ2S and provide a definition for each term
  - b. Ask if there are any questions that have arisen from this activity
  
3. Safe Circle (Questions appendix 1)
  - a. Ask participants to stand in a circle with elbow space between each person, if the room allows for it.
  - b. Indicate that you are going to ask a series of questions, but that this is a completely silent activity.
    - i. There are to be no high fives, no giggling, no questions.
    - ii. If the answer is yes for you, please step into the circle, acknowledge those who have stepped into the circle with you, and then take a step back out.
  - c. Begin to ask questions, give about 5 seconds between each one to allow for people to step in, look at others, step back out.
  - d. Once all questions have been asked, thank the participants for stepping into the circle, but also thank those who did not.
    - i. With either response to the question, it shows honesty: either in terms of comfortability with yourself or to the others within the room.
  
4. Discussion
  - a. Ask participants:
    - i. what may have caught them off guard;
    - ii. what questions did they not think about before
    - iii. What are their thoughts about the questions
  - b. How can we change the conversation so that the questions no longer pertain. How do we create inclusive spaces and questions?

## 5. Judgements

- a. Draw a box on a white board. Let participants know that they are going to fill the box but that it will be erased at the end of the activity and the conversation stays within the room.
- b. Ask the participants what are some of the first impressions / assumptions that people make about them when they first meet them.
  - i. Put an example for yourself on the board to start the activity (i.e. Bossy)
  - ii. Ensure that participants fill the box (about 10-15 terms, minimum) before you discuss the items

## 6. Discussion

- a. Ask the participants why people make these first judgements before they have had a chance to get to know them
- b. Pick out the example that you placed on the board, and ask them to think of reasons why people assumed that about you
  - i. I.e. Bossy may be because the person is loud, confident, strong eye contact, etc...
- c. As human beings we make assumptions about others as a way to protect ourselves from harm. If someone is an introvert and prefers to have quiet friends, then a strong personality that comes across as busy may seem intimidating and not desirable as a friendship / relationship

## 7. Judgements continued

- a. Erase the first box and draw a new one. Ask participants to fill it with assumptions / judgements that people make about LGBTQ2S individuals.
  - i. Indicate that this can come from things that they may have heard (radio, hallways, public spaces) or seen (tv, books, movies, others) and does not necessarily reflect their own view / opinion
- b. If all responses are negative thus far, add in a positive one or two and vice versa
- c. Once participants have filled in the box (about 10-15 terms, minimum), underline the negative terms in red, and the positive terms in green
  - i. Note that you may underline a few terms in both colours (i.e. weird can be seen as a positive and negative term)

## 8. Discussion

- a. Indicate the number of red versus the number of green terms within the box.
  - i. Note that you will probably come up with more red than green in this activity
- b. Ask the participants what can be done to create a positive culture (home, school, community) and eliminate those negative terms / stereotypes
  - i. Answers will vary but can include:
    1. being friendly / welcoming

2. Standing up to name callers
  3. Talking to others about this topic
  4. Telling people that it's ok to be different
  5. Creating welcoming spaces (i.e. gender neutral washrooms / changerooms)
- c. As participants give suggestions, erase the negative terms from the board until only green terms are left. Let them know that this conversation is a good step towards creating positive / inclusive spaces
- i. Bullying comes from the fear of the unknown, so by having these conversations, it's no longer the unknown, and we can welcome in new conversations.
- d. Ask participants if there are any further questions that have arisen from this activity.

## 9. Closing activity

- a. Show the following video: <https://goo.gl/NJ3pcH>
- b. Ask the participants what we know about the child
  - i. We cannot determine sexual orientation nor gender identity
  - ii. All we can determine is that this appears to be a male assigned child that likes to wear dresses
- c. Do the participants think the teacher is supportive?
  - i. She did turn the head of the boy forward when he was teasing the other little boy
  - ii. She spoke to the parents about the problem that was existing in the classroom
  - iii. Turning back to the fear of the unknown, the teacher seemed to be doing the best she could without proper information - fear of the unknown
- d. What are the thoughts about the father?
  - i. Sometimes it's hard for parents to let go and some will take longer than others to accept the situation. This is evident in both parents - mom was supportive from the beginning.
  - ii. Does wearing a dress change anything about him?
    1. No. He is still a male assigned individual married to a women. So we know that gender expression does not always indicate the gender of the person.

## LGBTQ2S+ Safe Questions

1. I have had a birthday so far this year
2. I have a sibling
3. I have been bullied
4. I have bullied someone else
5. I have a friend who is LGBTQ2S+
6. I have a family member who is LGBTQ2S+
7. Filling out forms causes stress when questions ask about my sex / gender
8. I worry about my safety when going to the washroom
9. Change rooms / showers are a problem when I go swimming

## Instructional Sample for K-3

### **Detailed Instructional Sample: Learning About Our Bodies**

#### **Overview:**

This activity helps children learn to integrate the sexual parts of their bodies with the rest of their bodies. The activity reinforces that the child is the owner of his/her body and must take responsibility for it. The teacher acknowledges that the private parts of the body are often ignored or given silly names, then provides the correct names.

Next the children are given an opportunity to draw male and female external genitals on outline figures. The teacher makes clear that these parts are private, that they may feel good when they are touched, that touching is done only in private, and that, except for health reasons, no one has the right to touch someone else's private parts without permission.

- Grade/subject(s): K,1/Physical and Health Education
- Big Ideas:
  - Knowing about our bodies and making healthy choices helps us look after ourselves.
- Competencies
  - Identify and describe a variety of unsafe and/or uncomfortable situations (K)
  - Describe ways to prevent and respond to a variety of unsafe and/or uncomfortable situations (1)
- Content
  - names for parts of the body, including male and female private parts
  - appropriate and inappropriate ways of being touched
- Core Competencies:
  - Personal Awareness and Responsibility: Well-being
- First Peoples Principles of Learning:
  - Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

#### **Source:**

Brick, Peggy (n.d.). *Learning Activities: Our Amazing Bodies – Every Part Deserves a Proper Name*. Retrieved from <http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.LearningActivitiesDetail&PageID=155> , with permission from the author.

## Materials:

- Two simple outlines of children, [one with a vulva](#), [one with a penis and scrotum/testicles](#). Each is covered with a bathing suit — attached with tape. (Note: you may want to enlarge the drawings and color the bathing suits before presenting this activity.)
- A [worksheet with simple outlines of two bodies](#) for each child.

## Learning Activities:

1. Tell the children that today we are going to learn about our bodies and all their different parts. Ask the children to touch and name the different parts of their bodies with you (non-private body parts for now). Set this activity to a musical beat.

*Below is a list of non-private body parts:*

*head, forehead, ears, cheeks, chin, nose, neck, shoulders, arms, elbows, wrist, hands, fingers, chest, ribs, back, waist, hips, stomach, thighs, knees, calves, ankles, feet and toes*

Start the activity by asking the children to repeat after you as you name and touch each body part in order starting with the head. Repeat the activity by mixing the order in which you name the body parts (i.e., knees, ears, waist, etc.)

2. Ask the children, "Were there any parts of the body we didn't touch or name?" Take a few responses. Tell the group, "Yes, we didn't touch or name the parts of our bodies that are private parts, the parts covered by a bathing suit. Today we're going to learn the grown-up names of these parts of our bodies."
3. Take the bathing suit off the female drawing.
  - a. Ask: "What parts are the private parts?" You might start with the breasts. If the children call out a slang name such as "boobs," accept it and add, "Now that you are growing up, you can use the grownup name "breasts."
  - b. Ask the children to say the name "breasts." (Expect giggling.)
  - c. Ask why people laugh at names for these body parts. (Acknowledging the laughter validates the fact that people often feel uncomfortable discussing these parts and helps children feel OK.)
  - d. Say: "These are important parts of our bodies, and it's good to know the correct names for them."
  - e. Ask: "What does it mean that a body part is 'private'?" Explain that these parts are usually covered by clothes or a bathing suit and that, except for health reasons, you have the right to decide who can touch them — because they are private!

- f. Point to the vulva (the outside genitals of the female) on the drawing. Ask the children if they know any names for this part. Again, accept slang, give the correct name, and ask the children to repeat the correct name. May also want to discuss how certain slang terms can be impolite and/or hurtful.
  - g. Put the bathing suit back on the female figure. As you do so, note that we keep these parts covered because they are private.
4. Take the suit off the male figure. (Expect more laughter — it's OK!) Repeat the previous procedure of asking the children for names of the private parts, providing the correct names, and having the children repeat each.
5. Put the bathing suit back on the male doll, saying again that we keep these parts covered because they are private. Note that sometimes people touch these parts because it feels good to touch them, but because the parts are private, they are touched only in private places. Ask the children to suggest private places (i.e., their bedrooms and the bathroom).
6. To assist the children in the next activity, remove the bathing suits from the boy and girl drawings and display them so they are visible to the group.

Give each child a worksheet with two simple body outlines. Tell the group:

- Here are two outlines of bodies — one for a girl and the other for a boy. First, decide which one will be the boy and which one will be the girl. Then give each a face and hair.
  - Second, give the boy and girl breasts. (As children, boys and girls have breasts that look the same.)
  - Third, give each body a belly button or navel.
  - Fourth, draw a penis and testicles on the boy and a vulva on the girl.
7. When they are done, ask the children to show you their drawings so you can write in the names of each body part. Ask each child to name the parts as you label them.
  8. Encourage the children to show their work to their parents.

## **Sexual and Reproductive Health Education Resources**

- ***Websites/Phonelines***

The following websites and phonelines provide information and resources on various sexual and reproductive health topics:

- <http://teachers.teachingsexualhealth.ca/>
- <http://www.sexualityandu.ca>

- <http://www.scarleteen.com/>
- Sex Sense Line #1-800-SEX-SENSE
- Kids Help Phone #1-800-668-6868 (KidsHelpPhone.ca)
- **Services**

The following organizations/individuals provide sexual and reproductive health education and other supports for teachers and/or parents:

- [Native Youth Sexual Health Network](#)
- [Options for Sexual Health](#)
- [Saleema Noon Sexual Health Educators](#)
- [Sexplainer](#)
- [YouthCO](#)

## **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Resources**

- **Websites & Tools**

The following websites and tools provide information and resources on various sexual orientation and gender identity topics:

- [Pride Education Network](#)
- [Questions & Answers: Gender Identity in Schools](#)
- [Questions & Answers: Sexual Orientation in Schools](#)

- **Services**

The following organizations provide supports for teachers, parents and/or students:

- [C.A.L.L. Out!](#)
- [The Trevor Project](#)



# District School Board Ontario North East

## Gender Identity and Expression Guidelines for Supporting DSB1 Students and Staff

All school districts exist within a broader context of the law and public policy that protects and defends human rights.

The Ontario Human Rights Code provides for equal rights and opportunities, and freedom from discrimination. The Code recognizes the dignity and worth of every person in Ontario, in employment, housing, facilities and services, contracts, and membership in unions, trade, or professional associations.

People who are discriminated against or harassed because of gender identity are legally protected under the ground of sex. This includes transsexual, transgender, and intersex persons, crossdressers, and other people whose gender identity or expression is, or is seen to be, different from their birth-identified sex. (<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/gender-identity-and-gender-expression-brochure>)



District School Board Ontario North East (DSB1) is committed to reinforcing federal and provincial legislation as well as ensuring that the freedoms they name are protected within the school system. As part of this commitment, DSB1 will ensure that students and staff of all gender expressions and identities feel safe, welcomed, and accepted in our schools.

## **PURPOSE**

Many questions arise when considering the best supports for transgender and gender-diverse students and staff (see Glossary for Commonly Used Terms and Definitions). These guidelines set best practices related to accommodation based on gender identity and gender expression. They have been designed to:

- Support transgender and gender-diverse students and staff, based on their human rights, to enable the free and full expression of their identity.
- Raise awareness and help protect transgender and gender-diverse students and staff against discrimination and harassment.
- Ensure transgender and gender-diverse students' and staff members' well-being, participation, and performance by creating safe and positive environments for learning.
- Promote the dignity and equality of those whose gender identity and or gender expression does not conform to traditional social norms.

See Appendix A for Connections to the Education Act and the Ministry of Education Policy and Program Memorandums.

### **Accommodation Based on Request**

District School Board Ontario North East will take reasonable steps to provide accommodation to students and staff who state that the Board's operations or requirements interfere with their right to free gender expression and or gender identity. The Board will balance its decision to accommodate on several factors, such as undue hardship, including the cost of the accommodation to the Board; health and safety risks to the person requesting accommodation and to others; and the effect of accommodation on the Board's ability to fulfill its duties under Board policies and the Education Act.

### **What you may expect in an accommodation request**

An accommodation request may come in the form of a verbal request, a written request, by e-mail communication, or a request that was dictated and recorded. The request may come directly from the student or the student's legal guardian(s). It is advised to have a student and/or guardians/parents put the request in writing for purposes of clarity and to help protect both parties in case of questions regarding the original request.

There is no age limit on making an accommodation request, and young students have the same rights to privacy and to have accommodations made on their behalf with or without their guardians' knowledge (the student owns their human rights, see Appendix B). Accommodation requests are generally specific requests as it pertains to a student, based upon some of the categories described in this document.

Each request will look different and each accommodation request will be different because they are developed on an individual, case by case basis. There may be a request made that is not described in this document as well.

### **Unresolved Requests**

Despite the Board's commitment to accommodate, an individual may feel that discrimination has occurred. The Board will, through its Policies and Procedures, take reasonable steps to address the unresolved issues raised by the affected person.

## **GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS**

Transgender or gender-diverse individuals have the right to be who they are openly. This includes expressing gender identity without fear of unwanted consequences as well as the right to be treated with dignity and respect.



### **Individual Procedures**

Board and school staff must consider each student's needs and concerns separately. Each transgender and gender diverse student is unique with different needs. An accommodation that works for one student cannot simply be assumed to be appropriate for another.

### **Privacy**

All students have a right to privacy; unless specifically directed by the student, schools must keep a student's transgender/gender non-conforming status confidential. Transgender and gender-diverse students have the ability, as do all students, to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and decide when, with whom, and how much of their private information to share with others.

**Some transgender and gender-diverse students are not open about their identity at home for safety or other reasons. A school should never disclose a student's gender-diversity or transgender status to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) without the student's explicit prior consent. This is true regardless of the age of the student.**

When school staff contacts the home of a transgender or gender-diverse student, the student should be consulted first to determine an appropriate way to reference the student's gender identity. It is strongly suggested that staff privately ask transgender or gender-diverse students at the beginning of the school year how they want to be addressed in correspondence to the home or at meetings with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s).

When the parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) are aware of the student's identity, schools should work closely with the student and family in developing an appropriate plan regarding the confidentiality of the student's transgender or gender-diverse status that works for both the student and the school. In some cases, transgender or gender-diverse students may feel more

supported and safer if other students are aware that they are transgender or gender-diverse. In these cases, all parties should work closely on a plan to inform and educate the student's peers. It may also be appropriate to engage external resources to assist with educational efforts.

### Creating Safer Spaces Through Inclusive Language

Trans people should always be addressed and accommodated in the gender in which they present unless they specifically request otherwise. If you are unsure, please ask the person how they prefer to be addressed. Most transsexual people will use pronouns based on their identified gender. Students and staff who wish to use pronouns other than the masculine or the feminine need to be accommodated equally.

**Deliberately addressing a student by the incorrect name or pronoun may be a form of discrimination.** This does not include inadvertent slips or honest mistakes, but it does apply to the intentional and/or persistent refusal to acknowledge and respect a student's gender identity by not using their preferred name(s) and pronoun(s).

## Pronouns 101

Type	Name	Example
Feminine	She, her, her	She went to the store. I spoke to her. It was her apple.
Masculine	He, him, his	He went to the store. I spoke to him. It was his apple.
All-gender	They, them, their	They went to the store. I spoke to them. It was their apple.
All-gender	Ze, zir/zem, zirs/zers	Ze went to the store. I spoke to zir/zem. It was zirs/zers apple.
All-gender	Ze, hir, hirs	Ze went to the store. I spoke to hir. It was hirs apple.

Please note that these are not the only pronouns. There is an infinite number of pronouns as new ones emerge in our language. For a useful legally-oriented source on this, please see <http://www.editorscanberra.org/a-singular-use-of-they/>

### Official Records

If a student goes through a legal name change, all current documentation will reflect the new name. A student who has not done this still has the right to have the chosen name used on a day-to-day basis. A student's name can be changed in a school database to reflect a "**preferred**" name and the gender can also be changed on attendance lists. Sometimes changes will need to be made by hand to accommodate the student's needs.

**For changes to official school records, school staff will work collaboratively with the student and the parent/guardian as part of the process.**

### **Aspen**

Gender is no longer correlated to a student's OEN and therefore a school can set the gender field to the student's identified gender. The gender specify field is only to be filled in, open text entry, if the Prefer to Specify is chosen in the gender field.

The image shows two screenshots of a student record form. The top screenshot shows a dropdown menu for 'Gender' with 'Female' selected. The dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Female', 'Male', 'Prefer not to disclose', and 'Prefer to specify'. The bottom screenshot shows the same form with the dropdown menu closed and the 'Gender specify' field as an empty text box.

### **Washroom Access**

All students have a right to safe restroom facilities and the right to use a washroom that best corresponds to their gender identity and expression. Requiring students to 'prove' their gender (e.g., by requiring a doctor's letter, identity documents) is not acceptable. A student's self-identification is the sole measure of the student's gender.

The establishment of all-gender washrooms in our schools can address the needs of many students. These can be either single-stall washrooms or multi-stall washrooms accessible to all students.

Single-stall washrooms should be available to students who want increased privacy. They should not need to provide a reason other than the desire for increased privacy.

### **Dress Codes**

Students have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity and expression, within the constraints of the school dress code.

### **Sports Activities, Gym Classes, and Change Rooms**

School staff must ensure students can exercise their right to participate in gender-segregated sports and physical education (P.E.) class activities in accordance with each student's gender identity.

A student's self-identification is the sole measure of the student's gender identity. It is not acceptable to require a transgender or gender-diverse student to participate in activities based on the student's sex assigned at birth or status of medical transition. It is not acceptable to require a transgender or gender-diverse student to prove their gender identity (by producing a doctor's letter, identity documents)

Students have the right to a safe change-room that corresponds to their gender identity. Transgender or gender-diverse students have the right to an accommodation that best meets their particular needs. Such accommodations can include:

- a) access to the change-room as would be afforded to any other student of that gender identity
- b) use of a private area within the public area (a bathroom stall with a door; an area separated by a curtain; a P.E. instructor's office in the change-room)
- c) a separate changing schedule in the private area (either utilizing the change-room before or after the other students)
- d) use of a nearby private area (a nearby washroom)
- e) access to the change room corresponding to the student's assigned sex at birth
- f) satisfaction of the P.E. requirement by independent study outside of gym class

It is not an acceptable accommodation to deny a student the opportunity for physical education. For example: *not allowing* the student to have P.E.; *forcing* the student to choose independent study; *Requiring* a transgender or gender-diverse student to use the change room corresponding to the student's sex assigned at birth.

### **Health Component in Physical Education Curriculum**

All people should see themselves represented in what is taught in health class. Teachers will present the range of human diversity, including, but not limited to: a range of bodies, a range of sexes, a range of gender identities and gender expressions, and a range of sexual orientations.

### **Curriculum Integration in All Subject Areas and Access to Accurate Information**

Too often, the existence of transgender people is erased or only included in a highly stigmatized way in classrooms, as well as in the media and popular culture. The lack of any positive acknowledgment of transgender issues or transgender history makes it difficult for transgender, gender diverse, or questioning young people to feel that they have a place in the world. Unless it is corrected, the omission of transgender and gender diverse people from the curriculum creates a misconception among many students that transgender people do not exist or are an object of scorn. Therefore, school board and school staff are expected to challenge gender stereotypes and integrate transpositive content into the teaching of all subject areas by following DSB1 policy and Provincial legislation.

School board and school-based curriculum leaders must integrate trans-awareness and trans-positive advocacy training into staff professional development curricula. Schools must acquire trans-positive fiction and non-fiction books and encourage the circulation of books that teach about gender diverse people.

### **Gender Segregation in Other Areas**

In the majority of circumstances where students are separated by gender in school activities (e.g., class discussions, field trips), students shall be permitted to participate in accordance with their gender identity. Activities that may involve the need for housing accommodations, to address student privacy concerns, will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. In such

circumstances, staff shall make every reasonable effort to provide accommodation that is acceptable to the student. If for reasons of privacy or safety, transgender or gender diverse students find standard gender-separated housing accommodations or shared accommodations unacceptable, private accommodations should be made available to the student at no additional cost.

\* See Appendix D for additional ways in which a school can be made a safer and gender-affirming place for transgender and gender non-conforming youth

### **Professional Learning, Advocacy Support, and Role Models**

District School Board Ontario North East related policy and Provincial legislation require school board leaders to ensure staff are educated in gender diversity, advocacy, and anti-transphobia education, in challenging gender stereotypes, and in using all-gender and inclusive language.

#### **Ontario Education Act Section 301.**

##### **Board support for certain pupil activities and organizations**

303.1 (1) Every board shall support pupils who want to establish and lead activities

and organizations that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, the acceptance of and respect for others and the creation of a positive school climate, including,

(a) activities or organizations that promote gender equity;

(b) activities or organizations that promote anti-racism;

(c) activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people with disabilities; or

(d) activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name gay-straight alliance or another name. 2012, c. 5, s. 12.

##### **Same, gay-straight alliance**

(2) For greater certainty, neither the board nor the principal shall refuse to allow a

pupil to use the name gay-straight alliance or a similar name for an organization described in clause (1) (d). 2012, c. 5, s. 12.

## **Student Engagement and Student Leadership**

Schools will support the development of a trans-inclusive GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance).

School board and school staff should encourage and support scholarships and awards that recognize the unique strength and resilience that transgender and gender diverse youth possess. They should support actions, activities, and campaigns that are trans-positive and create awareness about and seek to end, transphobia, gender stereotypes, and gender-based violence.

## **Resources for Transgender or “Transitioning” Students**

Schools have a unique and powerful opportunity to support transgender students, including those going through a gender transition, while providing education to the entire school community. It is not unusual for a child’s desire to transition to initially surface at school. If school staff believes that a gender identity issue is presenting itself and creating challenges for the student at school or if a student indicates an intention to transition, the school should make every effort to work with the student and the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s)/ caregiver(s). Where the student indicates an intention to transition, the school should work with the family to prepare for a formal gender transition at school and put in place measures for supporting the child and creating a sensitive supportive environment at school. Toward that end, schools should:

1. Make resources available to parents who have additional questions or concerns.
2. Develop age-appropriate lessons for students about gender diversity and acceptance:  
and
3. Be especially vigilant for any bullying or harassment issues that may arise for transgender students.

\* See Appendix E for additional support for trans youth and their families

Child and Youth Workers as well as Social Workers can be an important first resource for the student and school community. They are sensitive to identity issues and have been trained to be a source of support for students regarding gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

## **GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES**

Transgender or gender-diverse individuals have the right to be who they are openly. This includes expressing one’s gender identity without fear of unwanted consequences, as well as the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

A lack of knowledge about gender diverse and trans issues has the potential for creating misunderstanding in the workplace. Supervisors/school administrators should remind all individuals that they are expected to conduct themselves by following relevant District School Board Ontario North East Policies and Procedures and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

### **Statement of Confidentiality**

The transgender status of an employee is considered confidential and should only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis, and only with the consent of the employee unless the employee directs otherwise. However, transitioning employees are encouraged to participate in the necessary education of their coworkers at whatever level they are comfortable.

Also, current and prospective transgender and gender-diverse employees who encounter problems concerning identification documentation, such as payroll and insurance forms, are encouraged to raise those concerns with the appropriate department, directly.

### **Notification of Transition**

An individual employee beginning the transition process should contact their immediate supervisor or Human Resources and be prepared to speak about their intentions, needs, and concerns. Individual employees should make these contacts well before a planned transition date. If initial contact is made with the Human Resources, it is important at some point that the individual's immediate supervisor joins their support team. Transitioning individuals should be prepared to help inform and educate their managers and others to clarify their needs for accommodation.

Internal and external resources to assist transitioning individuals in this educational effort are listed at the end of this document.

### **Gender Expression**

All employees have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender expression. For transitioning employees, the decision as to when and how to begin to present as the gender they identify as is the individual's choice.

### **Washroom Access**

Employees have the right to use a washroom that corresponds to their gender identity, regardless of their sex assigned at birth. Requiring employees to 'prove' their gender (by requiring a doctor's letter, identity documents) is not acceptable. The employee's self-identification is the sole measure of their gender.

Where possible, workplaces will also provide an easily accessible all-gender single-stall washroom for use by any employee who desires increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason. However, the use of an all-gender single-stall washroom should always be a matter of choice for an employee.

### **Pronoun and Name Changes**

Employee records and work-related documents should be retained under the individual's legal name (as reflected on identification documents verified at the start of employment) unless and until the individual makes a legal change. Where a person's legal name does not match their new name, the new name should be used on all documentation, such as e-mail, phone directory, company identification card or access badge, nameplate, class lists, etc., except where records must match the legal name, such as insurance documents.

In everyday written and oral speech, the new name and pronouns should be used when the employee indicates they are ready.

Intentionally addressing an employee by the incorrect name or pronoun may be considered a form of discrimination and is not condoned. This directive does not prohibit inadvertent slips or honest mistakes, but it does apply to the intentional and/or persistent refusal to acknowledge or use an employee's gender identity.

Employees who wish to use pronouns other than the masculine or the feminine (such as 'ze', 'hir' and 'they') need to be accommodated equally.

## Surgeries

The process of transition may include one or more surgeries. In addition to genital surgery, surgeries can include facial feminization or other feminizing procedures for those transitioning from male to female, or chest reconstruction or other surgeries for those transitioning from female to male. Recognize that a transitioning employee may or may not have these surgeries for any number of personal reasons and that surgery in and of itself is not the goal or purpose of a gender transition.

Medical information, including surgery plans communicated by an employee, must be treated confidentially.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING A TRANSITIONING EMPLOYEE

### Key Principles for all

- If you are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the transition process, **allow the transitioning individual to educate you.**
- **Listen carefully** to what the individual is telling you and how they would like to be treated. For example, do they want to keep their transition as quiet as possible or do they wish to celebrate publicly?
- **Be open-minded** and discuss the transitioning individual's needs and concerns.
- If you oversee, manage, or lead an employee who is transitioning, it is important that you **demonstrate an understanding**, and use a sensitive approach to their needs and concerns.

### Supervisors/School Administrators

- Reassure the employee that they will be supported through the process of transition.
- Confirm that the conversation will be held in confidence.
- Advise the employee that Human Resources can assist them during their transition.
- Ask the employee for their suggestions on what you can do to help.
- Confirm who will be the main point of contact (manager or Human Resources)
- With the agreement of the transitioning employee, determine whether other staff in the location require training or briefing sessions on gender diverse and trans issues

Based on their experience, it may be quite stressful and frightening for them to make themselves vulnerable to a person upon whom their job depends.

### Human Resources

- Schedule a meeting with the employee to develop a plan to assist the employee in their transition.
- Advise the employee that the immediate supervisor will be informed of the plan.
- Ask the employee if they wish to inform their co-workers (and students, if applicable) about their transition, or if they prefer it be done for them.
- Determine with the employee the best timing for providing information to others.
- Document the plans regarding how the information will be shared.
- Ask the employee if they expect to change their name, and if so, what name and pronoun the employee will use and when the name change will be implemented.
- Document the name change information in the plan.

- Discuss and document the expected timeline and anticipated time off required for potential medical treatment.
- Explain that normal sick pay and leave policies will apply if the employee requires medical treatment.
- Subject to feasibility, discuss whether the employee would prefer to work in a different position/location during and/or after their transition.

### **Addressing Concerns of Co-workers and Community**

A lack of knowledge about transgender issues has the potential for creating misunderstandings and tension in the workplace. Managers should remind all employees that they are expected to conduct themselves by following District School Board Ontario North East related policies and procedures.

In addition to the initial workgroup meeting at which the employee's manager announces the transition (if the announcement was requested by the said employee, see Appendix C), managers should arrange training or briefing sessions for employees on transgender issues; this will help promote a positive work environment for all employees.

Ideally, training or briefing sessions should be completed before the employee's transition. This provides important information to coworkers, managers, and clients on what to expect when the individual begins his or her transition. Establishing some level of comfort as to what the transition is and why it is happening is important for preventing future misunderstandings or issues. However, it is the individual who sets the timeline for their transition, and an individual cannot be prevented from transitioning because training or briefing sessions have not occurred.

Employees who raise concerns about a transgender co-worker should be referred to the Ontario Human Rights Code, District School Board Ontario North East related policies and procedures. They should be informed that they must work cooperatively and respectfully with their co-workers regardless of their gender identity, and that failure to do so could result in corrective action, including termination of their employment.

\*See Appendix C for additional job-related planning for a gender transition

## Glossary

### COMMONLY USED TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The terms and definitions provided are not meant to label an individual but are intended as useful descriptors. These words, like all words, are social constructs developed over time. A new language is constantly formed to unite as well as to divide groups by experience, politics, and membership. These terms and definitions are not standardized and may be used differently by different people and in different regions.

Although these are the most used terms and definitions, students may prefer other terms to describe their gender identity or expression. Labels and identities should only be self-selected by individuals, not assumed by others. Biology does not imply identity. Nor do behaviour and expression alone constitute identity.

**Ally:** a person, regardless of his or her sexual orientation or gender identity, who supports and stands up for the human and civil rights of sexual and gender minority people.

**Asexual:** a person whose interest in others does not include sexuality.

**Biological Sex:** generally, refers to the sex assigned at birth based on external genitalia but also includes internal reproductive structures, chromosomes, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics such as breasts, facial and body hair, and fat distribution.

**Bisexual:** a person who is attracted physically, sexually, and emotionally to persons of the same and opposite sex.

**Cisgender:** having a gender identity that is congruent with one's biological sex (e.g. one's biological sex is female and one's gender identity is as a woman).

**Closet:** hiding one's gender identity or sexual orientation from others in the workplace, at school, home, and/or with friends.

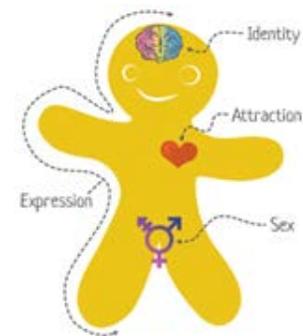
**Coming Out:** a process through which trans individuals disclose to others their gender variance and/or sexual orientation.

**Cross-Dresser:** those who were historically often referred to as transvestites are men or women who enjoy dressing as the opposite sex.

**FTM or F2M:** a person who is transitioning or has transitioned from female to male.

**Gender Dysphoria:** the emotional discomfort an individual experiences due to internalized conflicts arising from the incongruity between one's natal (birth) sex and one's sense of gender identity (a personal sense or feeling of maleness or femaleness).

**Gender Expression:** Refers to the way an individual expresses their gender identity (e.g. in the way they dress, the length and style of their hair, the way they act or speak, the volume of



their voice, and in their choice of whether or not to wear make-up.) Understandings of gender expression are culturally specific and will change over time.

**Gender Identity:** linked to an individual's intrinsic sense of self and their sense of being female, male, a combination of both, or neither regardless of their biological sex.

**Gender Non-Conforming/Gender Variant:** refers to individuals who do not follow other people's ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on the female or male sex they were assigned at birth (also called Gender Variance, Gender Independence and Gender Creativity). For example, this includes "feminine boys," "masculine girls," and individuals who are androgynous. Another example might be a male who comes to school in clothing that some might perceive as "girls' clothing," or the girl who plays games on the playground that some might perceive as "boys' games."

**Gender Queer:** an umbrella word referring to gender identities other than male and female. Many youths prefer the fluidity of the term genderqueer and reject the labels of transgender or transsexual as too limiting. For example, genderqueer individuals may think of themselves as having both male and female gender identities, or as having neither male nor female gender identities, or many other possible gender identities not restricted to the traditional gender binary model.

**Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS):** sometimes used instead of "sex reassignment surgery".

**Gender Roles:** the set of behaviours a person chooses or is expected to express, as a man or a woman. These are the behaviours that Western society most often calls "masculine" or "feminine". Gender roles can change with time and may be different from one culture to another. For example, many Indigenous communities have rich histories of multiple gender traditions.

**GSA:** a school-based gay-straight student alliance found in some junior and senior high schools across North America. Gender variant students should be made to feel welcome and included as part of a school's GSA.

**Heterosexism:** the assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that this sexual orientation is superior. Heterosexism is often expressed in more subtle forms than homophobia or transphobia. For example, allowing students to only bring opposite gendered partners to school dances or events is a form of heterosexism often exhibited in schools.

**Heterosexual:** a person who is physically, sexually, and emotionally attracted to someone of the opposite sex. Commonly referred to as "straight".

**Homophobia:** fear and/or hatred of homosexuality often exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, bullying, and/or acts of violence.

**Homosexual:** a person who is physically, sexually, and emotionally attracted to someone of the same sex. Commonly referred to as "gay" or "lesbian".

**Intersex:** a person who has male and female genetic and/or physical sex characteristics.

## **LGBTQ/GLBTQ2S**

Commonly used acronyms that are shorthand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, queer, and questioning identities. The term sexual and/or gender minorities is often used as an umbrella category to refer to these identities.

**Pan Gender**

Individuals who consider themselves to be other than male or female, a combination of the two, or a third gender. Genderqueer is a similar term.

**Queer:** historically, a negative term for homosexuality. More recently, LGBTQ communities have reclaimed the word and use it in a positive way to refer to themselves. Queer can also include anyone whose sexuality or gender identity is outside of heteronormative bounds.

**Questioning:** a person who is unsure of his or her gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Sexual Orientation:** sexual orientation generally refers to feelings of attraction, behaviour, intimacy, and identification with persons of the same or opposite gender. These deeply held intrinsic personal, social, and emotional thoughts and behaviours direct individuals toward intimacy with others. These relationships may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual, or if an individual is not inclined to have sexual relationships with another person, he or she may be asexual. One's sexual orientation may be known during childhood or adolescence, or it may take many adult years before an individual comes to terms with his or her sexual orientation.

**Sexual Minority:** an umbrella category for lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities.

**Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS):** also referred to as gender reassignment surgery (GRS), or sex change operation, sex reconstruction surgery, genital reconstruction surgery, gender confirmation surgery, and sex affirmation surgery.

**Transgender (TG), Trans-Identified, or Trans:** refers to individuals whose gender identity is different from what is assumed based on their biological sex at birth, and/or whose gender expression is different from the way males or females are stereotypically expected to look or behave.

**Transition:** the process of changing from one's natal (birth) sex to that of the opposite sex. In many cases, this process is begun with hormone therapy and is often followed by sex reassignment surgery (SRS).

**Transsexual (TS):** a term for a person who identifies as a sex other than the one they were assigned at birth. Many transsexuals desire to undergo a medical sex confirmation process (sometimes referred to as a sex reassignment) to change their birth-assigned sex.

**Transman or Transboy:** a person who is transitioning or has transitioned from female to male (FTM).

**Transwoman or Transgirl:** a person who is transitioning or has transitioned from male to female (MTF).

**Transvestite (TV):** See cross-dresser.

**Tranny:** sometimes used by non-transsexual people as a derogatory expression when referring to a transsexual individual. Also, used as a "reclaimed" word by transsexual individuals when

talking amongst themselves. When used this way, it is often understood as a positive expression.

**Two-Spirited:** some Aboriginal people identify themselves as two-spirited rather than as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or transsexual persons. Historically, in many Aboriginal cultures, two-spirited persons were respected leaders and medicine people and were often accorded special status based on their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives.

## APPENDIX A:

### Connections to the Education Act and the Ministry of Education Policy and Program Memorandums:

- All students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity\*, gender expression\*, age, marital status, family status or disability. (Education Act: Subsection 169.1 )
- To create schools in Ontario that are safe, inclusive, and accepting of all pupils.
- To encourage a positive school climate and prevent inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia, transphobia, or biphobia.
- To address inappropriate pupil behaviour and promote early intervention.
- To provide support to pupils who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour of other pupils.
- To establish disciplinary approaches that promote positive behaviour and use measures that include appropriate consequences and supports for pupils to address inappropriate behaviour. To provide pupils with a safe learning environment. 2012, c. 5, s. 6. (*Education Act: Part XIII; 300.0.1*)
- All students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability (Education Act: Subsection 169.1 )
- The school climate may be defined as the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect. A positive school climate is a crucial component of the prevention of inappropriate behaviour. (PPM 145)
- School board policies must be comprehensive and must cover the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. The code prohibits discrimination on any of the following grounds: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, ethnic origin, disability, creed (e.g., religion), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, family status, and marital status. Boards may also address related issues resulting from the intersection of the dimensions of diversity that can also act as a systemic barrier to student learning. (PPM 119)

## APPENDIX B:

### Human Rights in Ontario – Gender Identity and Gender Expression

#### *Excerpt from The Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Discrimination and Harassment Because of Gender Identity*

#### **Ontario's Human Rights Code**

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the *Code*) provides for equal rights and opportunities, and freedom from discrimination. The *Code* recognizes the dignity and worth of every person in Ontario, in employment, housing, facilities and services, contracts, and membership in unions, trade or professional associations.

Gender identity and gender expression are explicitly protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. This includes transsexual, transgender, and intersex persons, cross-dressers, and other people whose gender identity or expression is, or is seen to be, different from their birth-identified sex.

#### **Discrimination and harassment**

Discrimination because of gender identity is any action based on a person's sex or gender, intentional or not, that imposes burdens on a person or group and not on others, or that withholds or limits access to benefits available to other members of society. This can be obvious or subtle. Discrimination can also happen on a bigger, systemic level, such as when a rule or policy may appear to be neutral but is not designed in an inclusive way. This may harm the rights of people because of their gender identity.

Harassment is a form of discrimination. It includes comments, jokes, name-calling, or behaviour or display of pictures that insult or demean you because of your gender identity.

No person should be treated differently while at work, at school, trying to rent an apartment, eating a meal in a restaurant, or at any other time, because of their gender identity.

**Example:** An employee tells his manager that he cross-dresses. His manager says he will no longer qualify for promotions or job training because customers and co-workers will not be comfortable with him.

**Example:** A transgender woman is not allowed to use the women's washroom at her place of work. Her manager defends this by explaining that other staff have expressed discomfort. This workplace needs a policy that clearly states that a transgender employee has the right to use this washroom while providing education to resolve staff concerns and to prevent future harassment and discrimination. Organizations cannot discriminate, must deal with harassment complaints, and must provide a non-discriminatory environment for transgender people. This also applies to "third parties," such as people doing contract work or who regularly come into contact with the organization. Individuals should be recognized as the gender they live in and be given access to washrooms and change facilities on this basis unless they specifically ask for other accommodation (such as for safety or privacy reasons).

#### **The duty to accommodate**

Under the *Code*, employers, unions, landlords and service providers have a legal duty to accommodate people because of their gender identity. The goal of accommodation is to allow people to equally benefit from and take part in services, housing, or the workplace. Accommodation is a shared responsibility. Everyone involved, including the person asking for

accommodation, should cooperate in the process, share information, and jointly explore accommodation solutions.

**Example:** A transgender man raises safety concerns due to threats in the men's locker room at his gym. The gym manager takes steps against the harassers and explores possible solutions with the client, such as privacy partitions for all shower and change stalls in the men's locker room, or a single-occupancy shower and change room. They provide him with access to the staff facilities until a final solution is found.

**Example:** A transgender woman is strip-searched by male police, even though she has asked to have female officers do this type of search. The police service says that a male officer must be involved in the search because the person has not had sex reassignment surgery. The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario has ordered that a trans person who is going to be strip-searched must be given three options: the use of male officers only; the use of female officers only; or a search involving both male and female officers.

### **Keeping information private**

An employer or service provider must have a valid reason for collecting and using personal information, such as from a driver's licence or birth certificate, that either directly or indirectly lists a person's sex as different from his or her lived gender identity. They must also ensure the maximum degree of privacy and confidentiality. This applies in all cases, including employment records and files, insurance company records, medical information, etc.

### **For more information**

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's **Policy on Discrimination and Harassment Because of Gender Identity** and other publications are available at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca).

To talk about your rights or if you need legal help, or to make a human rights complaint – called an application – contact the:

Human Rights Legal Support Centre

Tel: 416-597-4900

Toll-Free: 1-866-625-5179

TTY: 416-597-4903

TTY Toll-Free: 1-866-612-8627

Website: [www.hrlsc.on.ca](http://www.hrlsc.on.ca)

## APPENDIX C:

### Job-Related Planning for a Gender Transition

These are the recommended steps in an on-the-job transition for a transgender employee. It may be appropriate to adapt to this generic process to fit a person's needs.

#### Advance Preparation

1. The transgender employee meets with their immediate supervisor or Human Resources. The employee shares their transgender status and intent to transition.
2. The appropriate set of stakeholders should be identified to plan the workplace transition. This will include the employee, their immediate supervisor, and Human Resources.
  - Consider which people in the organization you may need to have engaged at some point during the transition and when they need to be engaged.
  - Consider any specific issues that need to be addressed sooner rather than later.
3. Plan the transition. Include ways to address or resolve the issues listed here:
  - a) The date of the transition, i.e., the first day of the change of gender expression, pronoun usage, and name. *Recognize that the date of the transition will be driven primarily by the employee's situation and concerns.*
  - b) How employee's clients or students will be informed of the change. *If there is to be a general announcement, the employee may choose to talk to some of their co-workers to disclose plans on a one-on-one basis before a broader statement is made.*
  - c) The need to book an educational workshop.
  - d) What changes will be made to records and systems, and when.
  - e) How current benefits and policies against discrimination and harassment will protect this employee.
  - f) That all employees have the right to dress in accordance with their gender expression.
  - g) That all employees have the right to use a washroom that corresponds to their gender identity.
  - h) Any time off that may be required for medical treatment if known.
5. Plan for name changes to be effective on the day of transition, so that items like nameplates or badges will be available on the first day.

#### Communication Plan and Professional Development

1. Hold a workgroup meeting or include this in an already-scheduled face-to-face meeting. Everyone in the workgroup whom the employee interacts with often should be included. *Do not do this by e-mail.* A handout is optional in conjunction with the face-to-face meeting. The employee should choose whether to be personally present at this meeting, depending on the employee's comfort level.
2. The immediate supervisor of the workgroup should make the announcement, in conjunction with the highest-level manager in the group, to show support. The manager should:
  - a. Make it clear that the transitioning employee is a valued employee and has management's full support in making the transition.
  - b. Explain the Board's policy and recommendations.
  - c. Stress that on the transition day the employee will present him or herself consistently with their gender identity and should be treated as such; for example, he or she (or possibly another gender pronoun variant, see above) should be called by the new name and new pronouns.

- d. Lead by example. Use the new name and pronouns in all official and unofficial communication.
- e. Make it clear that the transition is “no big deal” and that work will continue as before.
- f. Answer people’s questions.
- g. Announce the timing of a mandatory “Transgender 101” to take place before the transition.

### **The First Day of Full-Time Workplace Gender Transition**

On the first day of transition, the employee’s manager should take these steps, much as they would for a new or transferred employee:

1. Issue a new identification badge with a new name and photo.
2. Place a new nameplate on the door/desk/cubicle/workstation.
3. Update any organization charts, mailing lists and other references to the new name.
4. Issue paperwork for the Employee services employee database, effective the first day of transition, to change the following:
  - a. New name.
  - b. Change the gender marker (“M” or “F” or “trans”, as requested).
  - c. Update the e-mail address if it contains the old name.
  - d. Order new business cards, ideally to have ready for the first day.
5. The manager should plan to be on-site with the worker the first day to make introductions, support the worker, ensure respectful and inclusive treatment and make sure that work returns to normal after a few hours.

## **APPENDIX D:**

### **Ways in which a school can be made a safer and gender-affirming place for transgender and gender-diverse youth**

#### **If a student talks to you about their gender identity, listen in a respectful and nonjudgmental way**

Do not brush them off, react with skepticism or disapproval, or pressure them into any particular category. Support them in developing their own understanding of their gender and direct them to resources for transgender, gender-diverse and questioning youth. Do not “out” a young person or disclose their gender identity to another without permission.

#### **Avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes**

Many of us enforce gender norms without even realizing it, but these stereotypes hurt everyone, especially transgender young people, gender-diverse young people, and young women. Think carefully about the messages in everything you say, do, teach, or communicate about gender. Are you complimenting girls more often on their appearance but boys more often on their athleticism? Do you ever imply there is something wrong with men who behave in stereotypically feminine ways? Do you discipline girls more harshly than you would otherwise if they seem “masculine” or “butch” to you? Does your language ever equate gender (the way people view themselves and express their genders) with genitals (a person’s birth sex and anatomical designation) or otherwise imply that the gender identities of transgender people are not “real”?

#### **Intervene and take action when students use gender-specific terminology to make fun of each other**

When students make fun of each other with terms like “sissy,” “pussy,” “faggot,” “dyke,” “homo,” “freak,” “it,” “he-she,” “bitch,” or “gay” and faculty fail to intervene, these words are perceived as acceptable. The use of such language further alienates transgender and gender-diverse students in schools and perpetuates discriminatory stereotypes about gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.

#### **Create all-gender and / or mixed-gender spaces**

Be mindful of how single-gender teams and/or groups (like girls-only groups and boys-only groups) can alienate transgender and gender-diverse students. Proactively create spaces for transgender and gender-diverse students within these groups and/or create additional spaces for transgender and gender-diverse students.

#### **Ensure that employment opportunities at your school are open to transgender and gender-diverse people**

Ensure that current and prospective employees are not discriminated against or harassed based on gender identity or any other non-job-related characteristic.

#### **Listen to criticism from transgender, gender-diverse, and questioning students**

Take such criticism seriously without becoming defensive; such feedback is an important opportunity to learn and grow.

## APPENDIX E: RESOURCE LIST

### Live Support for Trans and Gender-diverse Youth and their Families

**Camp Aranutiq** (two one week camps, July-August) <http://www.camparanutiq.org/> Camp Aranutiq is a weeklong, overnight summer camp for transgender and gender-variant youth ages 8 through 15.

**Gender Spectrum Family Conference** (July) <http://www.genderspectrum.org/> Focuses on the needs of gender-variant children and their families. There is a camp for gender variant children (with three age groups), a program for siblings, and a program for parents.

**Gender Odyssey Family Conference** (early Aug.) <http://www.genderodyssey.org/> Part of a larger conference for trans people of all ages, this conference offers a camp for children, programming for parents and a teens track.

**Camp Ten Oaks** (summer ) <http://www.tenoaksproject.org/> Based in Ottawa, Ten Oaks offers a week-long summer camp for children of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, queer) and/or non-traditional families, youth who are themselves LGBTQ, and their allies.

### Online Resources for Trans and Gender-diverse Youth and their Families

**Gender Creative Kids Canada:** Based in Montreal this provides information, news, and a service providers' directory <http://gendercreativekids.ca/>

Pride Education Network B.C. **The Gender Spectrum.** a K-12 resource created by educators at The Pride Education Network B.C. for use in schools: <https://www.pridenet.ca/resources>

Public Health Agency of Canada, **Questions and Answers: Gender Identity in Schools.** <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/387885/publication.html>

Vancouver Coastal Health, Transcend Transgender Support & Education Society, and Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition (2006). **An advocacy guide for trans people and loved ones:** <https://lgbtqpn.ca/library/trans-care-an-advocacy-guide-for-trans-people-and-loved-ones/>

**Families in TRANSition: A Resource Guide For Parents of Trans Youth.** Created by Central Toronto Youth Services this contains quotes from many local families with trans teens. <https://ctys.org/wp-content/uploads/CTYS-FIT-Families-in-Transition-Guide-2nd-edition.pdf>

**Mermaids:** a UK-based support for transgender children, their families and caregivers that contains stories, advice, and open letters from parents to parents. See "How Parents May React and Why" (2000): <https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/>

**Rainbow Health Ontario:** A province-wide service providing resources and information on matters of LGBTQ health. It includes a wide resource database and a provider database. The main site is here: <http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca> Their **fact sheet on supporting gender independent children** can be found here: <http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resources/rho-fact-sheet-gender-independent-children/>

**If you are concerned about your child's gender behaviour.** An affirming and positive resource from the Washington D.C. based The Children's National Medical Center. <http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resources/if-you-are-concerned-about-your-childs-gender-behaviors-a-guide-for-parents/>

**TransKids Purple Rainbow:** A U.S. based parent support group started by Jazz's family. <http://www.transkidspurplerainbow.org/>

**TransParent Canada:** a parent-to-parent support network, [www.transparentcanada.ca](http://www.transparentcanada.ca)

**Trans Youth Family Allies:** A U.S. group founded by parents who want to support their gender independent children. <http://www.imatyfa.org/>

### Reading Material for Families of Trans Youth

Brill, S. and r. Pepper. (2008) **The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals.** U.S.A. Cleis Press.

Ehrensaft, Diane. (2011). **Gender Born, Gender Made: Raising Healthy Gender-Nonconforming Children.** New York: The Experiment.

Lev, A.I. (2004). "Family emergence." **Transgender emergence: Therapeutic guidelines for working with gender-variant people and their families** (pp. 271- 314). New York: Hawthorn Press.

(Just) Evelyn **Mom, I need to be a girl** (online versions available in Arabic, English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish: <http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Evelyn/Evelyn.html>)

**Transgender Issues in Books for Youth, Children and Their Allies** (multi-page listing), compiled by Nancy Silverrod, Librarian, San Francisco Public Library, [nsilverrod@sfpl.org](mailto:nsilverrod@sfpl.org)

## Films and Documentaries about Trans and Gender-diverse Youth and their Families

***Girl Inside*** (2007), a Canadian documentary directed by Maya Gallus that follows Madison, a 26-year-old trans woman, over her three-year transition. Focuses on family relationships. 78 mins.

***Just Call me Kade*** (2002), a documentary directed by Sam Zolten about 14-year-old Kade Farlow Collins, a trans boy living with his understanding family in Tucson, Arizona. 26 mins.

***Ma Vie en Rose*** (1997), directed by Alain Berliner. A fictional story of 7-year-old Ludovic, born a boy, who is convinced she was meant to be a girl. Wide-release.

***Middle C*** (2007), produced by Carma Jolly and Tristan Whiston for CBC Radio One (Outfront). A multiple award-winning two-part radio documentary of Tristan Whiston's story of female-to-male transition, including family discussion and perspectives.

***Red Without Blue*** (2007), a multiple awards winning American documentary directed by Brooke Sebold, Benita Sills and Todd Sills. Shot over 3 years, this is a poignant and compelling story of 20-something Mark and Clair, born identical twins, coming out as a gay man and a trans woman, respectively. Featuring candid interview material with family members, the film examines a family's transformation over time. 77 minutes. [www.redwithoutblue.com](http://www.redwithoutblue.com)

***The Day I Decided...to be Nina*** (2000), a documentary directed by Ingeborg Jansen from the Netherlands, featuring 11 year-old Guido, born male, who, with family support, is now living part-time as the girl she's always wanted to be. English subtitles, 15 mins.

## Resources for Trans and Gender-diverse Youth

### ***Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line:***

A free peer support phone line for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, queer and questioning youth. Sunday to Friday, 4:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Tel: 416) 962-9688

Toll-Free (Ontario-wide) 1-800-268-9688.

TTY service: 416-962-0777

Text message support: 647-694-4275

Via instant message at: [www.youthline.ca/](http://www.youthline.ca/)

### ***Egale Youth OUTreach counselling***

Toll-Free (Ontario-wide) 1-844-44-EGALE

***Bending the mold: An action kit for transgender youth.*** A joint publication by Lambda Legal and the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC), available online:

<http://www.lambdalegal.org/publications/bending-the-mold>

***Beyond the Binary: A Tool Kit for Gender Identity Activism in Schools.*** The GSA

Network available for download at: <http://www.gsanetwork.org/resources/overview/beyond-binary>

***I think I might be transgender, now what do I do?*** A 2004 brochure by and for transgender youth by Advocates for Youth.

[http://www.ct.gov/shp/lib/shp/pdf/i\\_think\\_i\\_might\\_be\\_transgender.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/shp/lib/shp/pdf/i_think_i_might_be_transgender.pdf)

***Let's talk trans: A resource for trans and questioning youth.*** A 2006 joint publication by Vancouver Coastal Health, Transcend Transgender Support & Education Society and Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition. Available online: <http://www.cwhn.ca/en/node/27586>



**NORTH EAST SCHOOL DIVISION**

***Guidelines for Transgender and Gender-nonconforming Students***

Introduction and Context ..... 1

- The purposes of these guidelines are: ..... 1
- Scope ..... 1

Current Policy and Legislation ..... 2

But there are no Transgender Students in our School... 2

Language..... 2

- Definitions..... 3

Working with Transgender and Gender-nonconforming Students ..... 4

- Disclosure ..... 4
- Following Full Disclosure..... 4
- Student Transitions ..... 4
- Parental Involvement ..... 5

Considerations..... 5

- Privacy/Confidentiality ..... 5
- Media and Community Communication..... 5
- Official Records..... 6
- Names and Pronouns..... 6
- Access to Gender-Segregated Activities and Areas..... 6
- Physical Education Classes and Intramural and Interscholastic Athletics ..... 6
- Other Gender-Based Activities, Rules, Policies and Practices ..... 6
- Dress Code ..... 7

Developing School-wide Policy..... 7

NESD School Requirements..... 7

- Gay-Straight-Alliance (GSA) Liaison ..... 7
- GSA Clubs ..... 7

What Schools Can Do..... 8

What Teachers Can Do ..... 8

Resources ..... 9

References..... 10

## Introduction and Context

Gender is one of the most basic elements of human identity. Gender is so fundamental to our identity, that without being aware of it, many aspects of human life are structured by and reveal our gender. Gender identity is a person's internal sense of being male, female, both, neither, or somewhere in between. Most people mistakenly assume that our gender identity is defined by our anatomical sex. In the majority of cases, people's gender identity is consistent with their anatomical sex. However, some people feel and express a gender identity that is not the same as their biological sex. These inconsistencies can cause a great deal of distress and confusion to individuals, their families and their friends. Gender identity issues can also cause a great deal of anxiety among professionals working with these individuals, who may not feel informed and competent enough on this topic to provide support.

This document provides answers to some of the most common questions that educators and school administrators may have about gender identity in the Canadian school context.

It presents guidelines for working with transgender and gender non-conforming students, which outline best practices for schools to ensure that all students are safe, included and respected in school, regardless of their gender identity or expression including transgender and gender- nonconforming students. This document presents policy considerations, key points, alternatives to consider, and school requirements. It is meant to be adaptable to the specific needs of schools in our school division, while keeping the original intent of the guidelines intact.

### **The purposes of these guidelines are:**

1. To foster an educational environment that is safe and free from discrimination for all students, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, and
2. To facilitate compliance with current policy and legislation concerning bullying, harassment and discrimination.

These guidelines should be interpreted consistent with the goals of reducing the stigmatization of and improving the educational integration of transgender and gender non-conforming students, maintaining the privacy of all students, and fostering cultural competence and professional development for school staff. Furthermore, this guideline will support healthy communication between educators and parents/guardians to further the successful educational development and well-being of every student.

### **Scope**

This set of guidelines covers conduct that takes place in the school, on school property, at school- sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles and at bus stops. It also pertains to usage of electronic technology and electronic communication that occurs in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles and at bus stops, and on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists. These guidelines apply to the entire school community, including educators, administrators, school and division staff, students, parents, and volunteers.

## Current Policy and Legislation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1998) advocated for the creation of school environments that are open, inclusive and culturally affirming:

1. Article 2 - the rights of children and youth to learning environments free from discrimination
2. Article 19 - the rights of children and youth to protections from all forms of discrimination and violence

The most recent development in transgender rights is through Bill C-279, which proposes the addition of "gender identity" as a "prohibited ground of discrimination" in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and as an "identifiable group" in the *Criminal Code* definition of hate crimes. This bill was passed by the House of Commons in March 2013.

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination on the basis of a number of specific grounds, including gender identity.

The Education Act, 1995, identifies that every pupil shall observe standards approved by the board of education or the conseil scolaire with the respect to the rights of other persons, which in the Northeast School Division is reflected in [AP 511 – Respect for Human Diversity](#).

Saskatchewan Learning Caring and Respectful School Initiative provides the conceptual framework for promoting a positive and safe school environment that is open, inclusive, and culturally affirming.

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Code of Professional Ethics calls for teaching practices that recognize and accommodate the diversity within the classroom, the school, and the community. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Code of Professional Competence requires educators to create and maintain a learning environment that encourages and supports the growth of the whole student.

## But there are no Transgender Students in our School...

Transgender students are attending schools in Saskatchewan, whether or not they are visible to other students, staff or administrators. There are several reasons why gender variant students may not be visible within the school community. Most transgender youth are invisible out of fear for their safety. They are vulnerable to discrimination, verbal abuse, bullying, and physical violence. While many transgender students remain invisible, increasing numbers of students are identifying as 'transgender' and/or openly struggling with their gender identity. In fact, the proportion of transgender individuals in a population has been found to be 0.3% or more than 1 in 350 (Gates, 2011). Given this prevalence in the population, it is likely that educator, school administrators, and health professionals have or will encounter at least one transgender youth at some point in their professional career.

## Language

Transgender and gender-nonconforming youth use a number of words to describe their lives and gendered experiences. To list just a few examples, these students may refer to themselves as trans, transsexual, transgender, male-to-female (MTF), female-to-male (FTM), hi-gender, two-spirit, trans man, trans woman, and a variety of other terms. Terminology and language describing transgender individuals can differ based on region, language, race or ethnicity, age, culture, and many other factors. Generally speaking, school staff and educators should inquire which terms students may prefer and avoid terms that make these students uncomfortable.

## Definitions

These definitions are provided not for the purpose of labeling students but rather to assist in understanding these guidelines. Students may or may not use these terms to describe themselves.

**COMING OUT:** The process by which transgender people acknowledge and express their gender identities and integrate this information into their personal and social lives. Disclosure of the identity to family and friends.

**GENDER IDENTITY:** A person's deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender. One's gender identity can be the same or different than the gender assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity that matches their assigned gender at birth. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their assigned gender. All people have a gender identity, not just transgender people. Gender identity is an innate, largely inflexible characteristic of each individual's personality that is generally established by age four, although the age at which individuals come to understand and express their gender identity may vary based on each person's social and familial social development.

**GENDER EXPRESSION:** The manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice or mannerisms.

**GENDER PRESENTING:** A state in which individuals dress, act, or present themselves to others in ways that are true to who they are and that align with their internal sense of gender identity.

**OUTING:** The public disclosure of another person's gender identity without that person's permission or knowledge. Outing is very disrespectful and is potentially dangerous to the outed person.

**TRANSGENDER:** An adjective describing a person whose gender identity or expression is different from that traditionally associated with an assigned sex at birth. Other terms that can have similar meanings are transsexual and trans.

**TRANSITION:** The process in which a person goes from living and identifying as one gender to living and identifying as another.

**TWO-SPIRITED:** Some Aboriginal people identify themselves as two-spirited rather than transgender. Two spirited implies the embodiment of both masculine and feminine spiritual qualities within the same body.

**GENDER-NONCONFORMING:** A term for people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations, such as "feminine" boys, "masculine" girls, and those who are perceived as androgynous. This includes people who identify outside traditional gender categories or identify as both genders. Other terms that can have similar meanings include gender diverse or gender expansive.

**BULLYING:** Bullying means written; verbal or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities by placing the student (or students) in reasonable fear of physical harm. This includes conduct that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be included by the state or local educational agency]. This also includes conduct that targets a student because of a characteristic of a friend, family member, or other person or group with whom a student associates.

**HARASSMENT:** Harassment means written, verbal or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities because the conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive. This includes conduct that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion [or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be defined by the state or local educational agency). This also includes conduct that targets a student because of a characteristic of a friend, family member, or other person or group with whom a student associates. ODEL LANGUAGE, COMMENTARY & RESOURCES.

# Working with Transgender and Gender-nonconforming Students

Transgender or gender-nonconforming students have the right to openly be who they are, and they have a right to privacy and confidentiality. This includes expressing their gender identity without fear of unwanted consequences. Transgender or gender-nonconforming students have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Each transgender and gender-nonconforming student is unique, with different needs. Supports that work for one student cannot simply be assumed to work for another. We recognize that specific supports, in addition to those outlined in these guidelines, may be sought to enable a student's full expression of their identity or to protect their safety.

## **Disclosure**

If a student discloses their gender identity, it is important to support the student's self-definition and to ensure that they know they are valued. Listen to what the student has to say about how they are feeling and what their gender identity means to them and ask them what they would like you to do (if anything). It is important to not attempt to 'fix' the gender variant youth by attempting to abandon their gender variant identity. This is not effective and actually leads to low self-esteem and mental health issues such as depression, self-harm and suicide.

Current research indicates that individuals consciously select people to disclose to whom they trust and who they believe will be supportive and sympathetic to their gender identity. Maintaining the trust and confidentiality of the transgender youth is, therefore, paramount. For example, when a student discloses their gender identity, ask them what name they would prefer to be called, what pronouns they would prefer you to use with them, talk to them about who they have disclosed to, who is and is not supportive, and who they would like help disclosing to. Do not talk to anyone about their identity, including parents/caregivers, to whom they have not already disclosed their gender identity.

## **Following Full Disclosure**

The school administrator is encouraged to request a meeting with a transgender student and their parent/guardian upon the student's enrollment in a school or in response to a currently enrolled student's change of gender expression or identity.

The goals of the meeting are to:

1. Develop understanding of that student's individual needs with respect to their gender expression or identity, including any accommodations that the student is requesting or that the school will provide according to Division guidelines.
2. Develop a shared understanding of the student's day-to-day routine within the school so as to foster a relationship and help alleviate any apprehensions the student may have with regard to their attendance at school.

## **Student Transitions**

In order to maintain privacy and confidentiality regarding their transition and gender identity, transgender students may wish -but are not required -to transition over a summer break or between grades. Regardless of the timing of a student's transition, the school shall act in accordance with the following age-appropriate policies.

**Elementary School:** Generally, it will be the parent or guardian that informs the school of the impending transition. However, it is not unusual for a student's desire to transition to first surface at school. If school staff believes that a gender identity or expression issue is presenting itself and creating difficulty for the child at school, approaching parents about the issue is appropriate at the elementary level. Together, the family and school can then identify appropriate steps to support the student.

**Secondary School:** Generally, notification of a student's parent about his or her gender identity, expression or transition is unnecessary, as they are already aware and may be supportive. In some cases, however, notifying parents carries risks for the student, such as being kicked out of the home. Prior to notification of any parent or guardian regarding the transition process, school staff should work closely with the student to assess the degree to which, if any, the guardian will be involved in the process and must consider the health, well-being, and safety of the transitioning student.

When a student transitions during the school year, the school should hold a meeting with the student (and parents if they are involved in the process) to ascertain their desires and concerns. The school should discuss a timeline for the transition in order to create the conditions supporting a safe and accepting environment at the school. Finally, the school shall train school administrators and any educators that interact directly with the student on the transition plan, timelines for transition, and any relevant legal requirements.

### **Parental Involvement**

The parents and guardians of transgender and gender-nonconforming students can play a critical role both establishing a safe and accepting school environment for such youth. Transgender and gender nonconforming youth are both coming out in growing numbers and transitioning earlier. We encourage schools to work with supportive parents and guardians whenever possible to establish healthy communication and ensure the needs of the needs of these students are met.

## **Considerations**

### **Privacy/Confidentiality**

All persons, including students, have a right to privacy, and this includes the right to keep one's transgender status private at school. Information about a student's transgender status, legal name, or gender assigned at birth also may constitute confidential medical information. Disclosing this information to other students, their parents, or other third parties may violate privacy laws. The Division shall ensure that all medical information relating to transgender and gender nonconforming students shall be kept confidential in accordance with local provincial privacy laws. School staff shall not disclose information that may reveal a student's transgender status to others, including parents and other school staff, unless legally required to do so or unless the student has authorized such disclosure.

Transgender and gender-nonconforming students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share private information. The fact that a student chooses to disclose his or her transgender status to staff or other student does not authorize school staff to disclose other medical information about the student. When contacting the parent or guardian of a transgender student, school staff should use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's gender assigned at birth unless the student, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise.

### **Media and Community Communication**

When communicating to the media or community about issues related to gender identity, the Division shall have a single spokesperson to address the issue. Rather than directly commenting on the issue, other Division and school staff shall direct parents and the media to the designated spokesperson. Protecting the privacy of transgender and gender nonconforming students must be a top priority for the spokesperson and all staff, and all medical information shall be kept strictly confidential. Violating confidentiality of this information is a violation of this policy and may be a violation of local and federal law.

## **Official Records**

The school shall maintain a mandatory permanent student record that includes a student's legal name and legal gender. However, to the extent that the school is not legally required to use a student's legal name and gender on other school records or documents, the school shall use the name and gender preferred by the student. The school will change a student's official record to reflect a change in legal name or gender upon receipt of documentation that such change has been made pursuant to a court order. In situations where school staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a transgender student's legal name or gender, such as for purposes of standardized testing, school staff and administrators shall adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information.

## **Names and Pronouns**

Every student has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to the student's gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the student need not change his or her official records. It is strongly recommended that teachers privately ask transgender or gender nonconforming students at the beginning of the school year how they want to be addressed in class, in correspondence to the home, or at conferences with the student's guardian.

## **Access to Gender-Segregated Activities and Areas**

With respect to all restrooms, locker rooms or changing facilities, students shall have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Schools may maintain separate restroom, locker room or changing facilities for male and female students, provided that they allow students to access them based on their gender identity.

In any gender-segregated facility, any student who is uncomfortable using a shared facility, regardless of the reason, shall, upon the student's request, be provided with a safe alternative to avoid stigmatization. This may include, for example, addition of a privacy partition or curtain, provision to use a nearby private restroom or office, or a separate changing schedule. However, requiring a transgender or gender nonconforming student to use a separate, nonintegrated space *threatens* to publicly identify and marginalize the student as transgender and should not be done unless requested by a student. Under *no circumstances* may students be required to use sex-segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity.

Where available, schools are encouraged to designate facilities designed for use by one person at a time as accessible to all students regardless of gender, and to incorporate such single-user facilities into new construction or renovation. However, under no circumstances may a student be required to use such facilities because they are transgender or gender-nonconforming.

## **Physical Education Classes and Intramural and Interscholastic Athletics**

All students shall be permitted to participate in physical education classes and intramural sports in a manner consistent with their gender identity. Furthermore, all students shall be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics in a manner consistent with their gender identity as supported by Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association [By-Law 8 \(a\)\(b\)\(c\)](#) regarding Eligibility of Student Participants.

## **Other Gender-Based Activities, Rules, Policies and Practices**

As a general matter, schools should evaluate all gender-based activities, rules, policies, and practices -including classroom activities, school ceremonies, and school photos-and maintain only those that have a clear and sound pedagogical purpose. Students shall be permitted to participate in any such activities or conform to any such rule, policy, or practice consistent with their gender identity.

## Dress Code

Schools may enforce dress codes pursuant to school policy. Students shall have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity, within the constraints of the dress codes adopted by the school. School staff shall not enforce a school's dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming students than other students.

## Developing School-wide Policy

School administrators, teaching and support staff can improve the school environment for transgender and gender non-conforming students and foster an environment where people of all gender identities can be themselves, by learning about and providing accurate information about gender diversity, and by supporting transgender and gender-nonconforming students through inclusive school policy.

Pursuant to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, a policy against harassment and violence against transgender and gender-nonconforming students should be implemented in the school. By adding 'gender identity' to the school's non-- discrimination policies, transgender and gender-nonconforming students will be given legal recourse if they have been bullied or victimized. It will also send a message to the school community that gender variant people are worthy of respect and that violence and discrimination will not be tolerated.

Discrimination, bullying, and harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression shall be prohibited within North East School Division and the responsibility of each school and North East School Division and all staff to ensure that all students, including transgender and gender non-conforming students, have a safe school environment. The scope of this responsibility includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment, or bullying is given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking age and developmentally appropriate corrective action, and providing students and staff with appropriate resources.

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived gender identity or expression are to be taken seriously and handled in the same manner as other discrimination, bullying, or harassment complaints.

## NESD School Requirements

### Gay-Straight-Alliance (GSA) Liaison

K-12 and High Schools of the Northeast School Division shall possess a GSA liaison that is publicized to the student body. Such awareness will allow transgender and gender-nonconforming students to know who they can contact if they have questions/concerns, or if they have experienced harassment. In such instances, students must have the option of anonymous reporting, since some students may fear retribution for reporting victimization.

### GSA Clubs

Transgender and gender-nonconforming students often feel isolated. Creating a support or social group where they feel part of a community can lead to greater sense of self-worth and increase the likelihood that they will remain in school. Research indicates that low school attachment, high feelings of alienation from school and peers leads to greater risk of dropping out.

In response, a GSA Club **should** be created in NESD school's where transgender and gender-nonconforming youth are welcome and can find a sense of belonging. The club should be named by the student themselves with the school GSA liaison as the advisor. In the event any student's request for an alliance is denied, the ministry will work with the school division to ensure that the needs of each individual student are being met.

## What Schools Can Do

1. School communities must meet the unique needs of transgender students and gender nonconforming students; the whole school community needs to be supportive, accommodating, protective and accepting.
2. Support all staff in learning about transgender and gender-nonconforming students and make professional development opportunities and supporting resources available.
3. Advocate for anti-bullying policies that specifically name gender identity.
4. Ensure that there are trained counsellors available for students who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and/or personal counselling.
5. Establish a protocol for responses when a student comes out, is outed or experiences bullying.
6. Work with the school librarian to ensure that appropriate books, media and supports are readily available.
7. In terms of washroom and change room use, the primary aim is for transgender and gender nonconforming students to feel comfortable using their preferred washroom or change room (e.g., the female washroom for a female-identified transgender student). Establish a private space to change if so desired by the student, along with single-use or private bathrooms as needed.
8. Critique forms and documents that you use and delete the female/male categories if they are not necessary. If they are deemed necessary, include "other" in addition to female and male.
9. Help all students and parents understand the need for acceptance of difference. Hold information sessions to increase knowledge and awareness for students, staff and parents.
10. Establish a trans-inclusive Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA).

## What Teachers Can Do

1. Educate Yourself
  - Learn as much as you can about the special needs of transgender and gender nonconforming students.
  - Find people around you who are knowledgeable about the subject and talk to them.
  - Challenge your own assumptions by putting yourself in the shoes of a transgender individual.
  - Be open to making mistakes and learning from them- as long as you are coming from a place of respect and willingness to learn, asking questions is perfectly acceptable.
  - Educators can learn from transgender and gender-nonconforming students if they are willing and open to do so. Transgender students may have suggestions for how teachers can create safe and caring environments. Immediately stop any transphobic comments and behaviour. If these events are not addressed, students will learn that the verbal and physical harassment of transgender students is acceptable behaviour condoned by educators.
2. Examine gendered language and teaching practices
  - Consider to what extent your teaching practices are gendered. For example, do you group students by gender; are your choir, health and PE classes segregated by gender; do you require students to dress in gender conforming attire; do you have gender specific expectations, language and rewards for girls that are different for boys? Instead of basing groups on gender, use criteria such as ability or interest, or randomize groupings.

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**Comox Valley Schools**

A Community of Learners

INNOVATIVE • INQUISITIVE • INCLUSIVE

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# BOARD POLICY HANDBOOK

**The Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)**

June 25, 2019

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This Board Policy Handbook has been developed to highlight and support the very important governance function of the board. In addition to clearly defining the role of the board, the role of the superintendent and the delegation of authority from the board to the superintendent, it includes the following as policies:

1. Foundational statements which provide guidance and direction for all activities within the district;
2. Directions for how the board itself is to function and how individual trustees are to conduct themselves; how board committees and representatives are to function;
3. Statements as to how appeals and hearings will be conducted;
4. Non-delegable matters such as policy making and school closures; and
5. Specific matters which the board has chosen not to delegate to the superintendent.

This Board Policy Handbook is intended to be supplemented by an Administrative Procedures Manual; the primary written document by which the superintendent directs staff. The Administrative Procedures Manual must be entirely consistent with this Board Policy Handbook.

The development of two (2) separate and distinct documents is meant to reinforce the distinction in this district between the board's responsibility to govern and the superintendent's executive or administrative duties.

It is to be noted that the electronic versions of both the Board Policy Handbook and the Administrative Procedures Manual as well as any other handbooks/manuals referenced are always the most current documents available.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Policy 1 – Foundational Statements	1
Policy 2 – Role of the Board	4
Policy 2 – Appendix – Facilitated Board Self Evaluation Process	10
Policy 3 – Role of the Trustee	13
Policy 3 – Appendix – Services, Materials and Equipment provided to Trustees	17
Policy 4 – Trustee Code of Conduct	18
Policy 4 – Appendix – Trustee Code of Conduct Sanctions	21
Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair	25
Policy 6 – Role of the Vice-Chair	27
Policy 7 – Board Operations	28
Policy 7 – Appendix – Trustee Elections Bylaw	43
Policy 8 – Board Committees	47
Policy 9 – Board Representatives	55
Policy 10 – Policy Making and Review	59
Policy 11 – Delegation of Authority	62
Policy 12 – Role of the Superintendent	63
Policy 12 – Appendix A – Superintendent Evaluation - Process, Criteria and Timeline	65
Policy 12 – Appendix B – Superintendent Performance Assessment Guide	66
Policy 13 – Appeals Bylaw	70
Policy 13 – Appendix Notice of Appeal – School Act Appeals	73
Policy 14 – Permanent School Closure	74
Policy 15 – Recruitment and Selection of Personnel	77
Policy 16 – Indemnification Bylaw	80
Policy 17 – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	82
Policy 17 – Appendix – Resources and Definitions	92
Policy 18 – Accumulated Operating Surplus and Internally Restricted Funds	96
Policy 19 – Indigenous Recognition and Indigenous Voice	97
Policy 20 – Communications and Community Engagement	98
Policy 21 – Community Education and Community Schools	102
Policy 22 – Provision of Menstrual Products to Students	103

Policy 23 – Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students	104
Policy 24 – Equity and Non-Discrimination	106
Policy 25 – Child Care	108

### FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

The Board of Education, in its role as governor and advocate for public education in our community, has developed the district's vision, mission, values and beliefs, and guiding principles to ensure students achieve their fullest potential. The guiding principles are meant to serve as lens which will guide the decisions and actions of every person in our district. The Universal Guiding Principles apply to every sector and person associated with our district, from board member to student. The Operating Guiding Principles provide more focused direction in regard to specific areas of district operations.

#### 1. **Vision Statement**

An inclusive learning community that embraces diversity, fosters relationships and empowers all learners to have a positive impact on the world.

#### 2. **Mission Statement**

To inspire engaged, compassionate, resilient lifelong learners and cultivate a collaborative community together.

#### 3. **Motto**

A community of Learners: Innovative, Inquisitive, Inclusive

#### 4. **Value and Belief Statements**

- 4.1 Trusting relationships based on respect, integrity and ethical behavior.
- 4.2 A commitment to Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- 4.3 Equity, including, dignity, and acceptance for all.
- 4.4 Global awareness and environmental stewardship.
- 4.5 Innovation, creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking.
- 4.6 Accountability and shared responsibility.
- 4.7 Open and engaging communication.
- 4.8 Celebration of learning.

#### 5. **Universal Guiding Principles**

For everything we decide and do, we will hold ourselves accountable and we will ask:  
*Does it support student success?*

- 5.1 Will it promote, encourage, and foster learning for everyone?
- 5.2 Will it build trust and good relationships?
- 5.3 Do we engage our community in a meaningful way?
- 5.4 Is it the responsible thing to do now, and in the future?
- 5.5 Are we being open, fair and ethical?

## 6. Operating Guiding Principles

### 6.1 *Student Success*

- 6.1.1 Organization will develop and maintain an understanding of what constitutes student success.
- 6.1.2 An inclusive and respectful learning environment will support students to become responsible and compassionate citizens.

### 6.2 *Educational Programs (Instruction)*

- 6.2.1 Individual learning paths for each student will be accommodated.
- 6.2.2 Educational instructional strategies / methods will optimize student success.
- 6.2.3 Innovative educational programs will be developed to support the unique needs of every learner.
- 6.2.4 Learning partnerships will be developed and valued.
- 6.2.5 Programs will be reviewed to determine if intended results are achieved.
- 6.2.6 Where appropriate, technology will be used across all curricula.
- 6.2.7 Students will learn about environmental stewardship and sustainability.

### 6.3 *Human Resources*

- 6.3.1 Well-being of staff will be promoted.
- 6.3.2 Employment contracts will be honoured.
- 6.3.3 Decisions will be sustainable and demonstrate best practices.
- 6.3.4 Processes will be transparent.

### 6.4 *Financial Management*

- 6.4.1 Budgets shall be developed in consultation with the educational community.
- 6.4.2 Financial reserves will be established and maintained in a strategic manner.
- 6.4.3 Budget decisions shall be sustainable in future years.

### 6.5 *Facilities and Operations*

- 6.5.1 Facilities will be available for community use.
- 6.5.2 Joint use and partnership agreements will be considered.
- 6.5.3 Facilities shall be maintained at the highest standard possible.
- 6.5.4 Long-term facility planning will occur.
- 6.5.5 Transportation services will be coordinated efficiently and in a safe manner.

### 6.6 *External Partnerships*

- 6.6.1 Community stakeholders will be engaged in decision-making processes whenever possible.

6.6.2 External partnerships will be developed to enhance operations and services for students.

6.6.3 We foster community partnerships that enrich the lives of our learners.

## 7. Strategic Plan Priorities

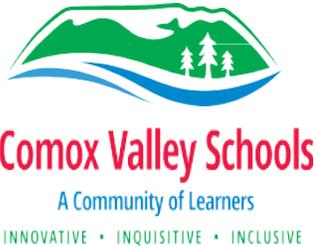
7.1 Educational Excellence: Optimize innovative practices and learning opportunities.

7.2 Community Engagement: Deepen integration of Indigenous ways and knowing & Foster relationships with community, parents, and educational partners.

7.3 Organizational Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship: Optimize infrastructure to support learning & Foster environmental stewardship.

7.4 Physical Health & Mental Well-Being: Invest in the holistic well-being of our people.

## 8. The Logo Design and Use



Our Logo represents our geographical location on Vancouver Island which is depicted by the ocean with its marine life, mountains and forest.

The logo is the property of the Comox Valley School Board and shall only be used by external organizations with prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

## 9. Legal Name

The Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley).

## 10. Operational Name

Comox Valley Schools

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 75, 85 *School Act*  
Order in Council #597, November 9, 2018

### ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Board of Education, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) is the corporate entity established by provincial legislation and is given authority by the *School Act* and attendant Regulations to provide overall direction and leadership to the district. It is accountable for the provision of appropriate educational programs and services to enrolled students of the district to enable their success, in keeping with the requirements of government legislation.

The board is charged with the responsibility for providing an education system that is organized and operated in the best interests of the students it serves. The *BC School Act* provides that the board is responsible for the improvement of student achievement in the school district. To that end the board shall make continual appraisals of the educational, administrative, and planning processes in light of the board's stated goals and objectives.

#### Specific Areas of Responsibility

##### 1. *Accountability to the Provincial Government*

The Board shall:

- 1.1 Act in accordance with all statutory requirements of provincial legislation to implement educational standards and policies.
- 1.2 Perform board functions required by governing legislation and existing board policy.

##### 2. *Developing and Maintaining a Culture of Student Learning*

The Board shall:

- 2.1 Ensure board agendas reflect the board's commitment to improving student success.
- 2.2 Ensure the district's Strategic Plan identifies student learning key results.
- 2.3 Ensure the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning and the Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement (IEEA) are reviewed at least annually including identification of trends and issues.
- 2.4 Ensure resources for approved initiatives to improve student outcomes are included in the annual operating budget.
- 2.5 Ensure the effectiveness of the superintendent's leadership in improving student outcomes is assessed annually.

### 3. *Accountability to and Engagement of the Community*

The Board shall:

- 3.1 Assess community values and interests and incorporate them into the school system's foundational statements and engage staff, parents and the wider community in developing and supporting the district vision.
- 3.2 Make decisions that address the needs of all district students.
- 3.3 Establish processes and provide opportunities for community input and engagement.
- 3.4 Report district student learning outcomes at least once annually to the community.
- 3.5 Develop procedures for and hear appeals as required by statute and/or board policy.
- 3.6 Meet regularly with municipal government representatives, local provincial representatives and the Indigenous Education Council, and as required with other entities to achieve desired educational outcomes.
- 3.7 Model a culture of respect and integrity, openness and transparency.
- 3.8 Make decisions that reflect both individual community interests and values, and those of the entire school district.

### 4. *Strategic Planning*

The Board shall:

- 4.1. Provide overall direction for the district by establishing foundational statements which are developed in consultation with stakeholders.
- 4.2 Annually review district priorities and key results as indicated in the district's Strategic Plan.
- 4.3 Annually ensure evaluation of the effectiveness of the district in achieving established priorities and key results.
- 4.4 Approve district strategic plan and any adjustments thereto.

### 5. *Policy*

The Board shall:

- 5.1 Identify how the board is to function.
- 5.2 Delegate authority to the superintendent and define commensurate accountabilities.

- 5.3 Formulating policies and bylaws in conformity with this Act for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the school district.
- 5.4 Make the final decision as to the approval of all policy statements.
- 5.5 Develop, assess, review and revise policies as required to ensure intended results are being achieved and that policies are consistent with legislation.
- 5.6 Ensure motions which are intended to have continuing effect are integrated into existing or new policy statements.
- 5.7 Govern the district through board adopted policies and resolutions.
- 5.8 Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies developed by the board in achieving the board's goals and desired outcomes.

## 6. *Board / Superintendent Relations*

The Board shall:

- 6.1 Select and hire the superintendent.
- 6.2 Provide the superintendent with clear board direction.
- 6.3 Delegate in writing, administrative authority and identify responsibility subject to the provisions and restrictions in provincial legislation and regulations.
- 6.4 Annually evaluate the superintendent in accordance with a pre-established performance appraisal mechanism.
- 6.5 Annually review superintendent compensation.
- 6.6 Respect the authority of the superintendent to carry out executive action and support the superintendent's actions which are exercised within the delegated discretionary powers of the position.
- 6.7 Ensure all board members interact with the superintendent in a respectful professional manner.
- 6.8 In consultation with the superintendent, review and adjust the annual Board Work Plan.
- 6.9 Promote a positive working relationship with the superintendent.
- 6.10 Promote the professional growth of the superintendent in continuing to provide quality district leadership.

## 7. *Political Advocacy/Influence*

The Board shall:

- 7.1. Become or retain membership in the BCSTA.
  - 7.2. Make decisions regarding British Columbia School Trustee Association (BCSTA) and British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) issues.
  - 7.3. Advance district positions and priorities including through BCSTA where applicable.
  - 7.4. Act as an advocate for public education and the district through the development of an annual plan for advocacy including focus, key messages, relationships and mechanisms.
  - 7.5. Arrange meetings with elected provincial / federal / municipal government officials to communicate and garner support for the district's priorities and directions.
  - 7.6. Advocate for public education.
  - 7.7. Develop an annual advocacy plan and review its effectiveness annually. The plan shall include the advocacy focus, key messages and mechanisms.
  - 7.8. Participate in provincial and/or national school board associations as deemed appropriate.
8. *Board Development*

The Board shall:

- 8.1. Annually develop a board development plan aligned with district priorities and board evaluation outcomes.
- 8.2. Annually evaluate the board's effectiveness.
- 8.3. Complete a skills matrix within three (3) months of election that identifies the skills the board requires to provide effective governance, as well as an assessment of the collective skills that trustees possess.

9. *Fiscal Accountability*

The Board shall:

- 9.1. Ensure the fiscal integrity of the district.
- 9.2. Approve budget process and timelines at the outset of the budget process.
- 9.3. In collaboration with the superintendent, identify budget assumptions and draft priorities to be used in the creation of the draft annual operating budget.
- 9.4. Approve the annual budget and allocation of resources to achieve desired results, including strategic priorities.
- 9.5. Annually approve the district's updated Five (5) Year Capital Plan.

- 9.6. Annually appoint the auditor and approve the terms of engagement.
- 9.7. Review annually the audit report and management letter and approve those recommendations to be implemented.
- 9.8. Annually review and approve remuneration for excluded staff.
- 9.9. Approve the acquisition and disposition of district land and buildings.
- 9.10. Approve the annual spending plan for the annual facilities grant.
- 9.11. Approve amended annual budget.
- 9.12. Monitor the fiscal management of the district through receipt of at least quarterly variance analyses and year-end projections and updates on capital spending against the budget.
- 9.13. Approve borrowing for capital expenditures within provincial restrictions.
- 9.14. Approve transfer of funds to/from restricted and non-restricted surplus funds.
- 9.15. Approve transportation assistance rates.
- 9.16. Approve changes to student fee schedules.
- 9.17. Establish an Audit and Finance Audit Committee of the board. Terms of Reference for this committee will include oversight of audit and financial reporting, including review and approval of quarterly and annual financial statements, transfer of surplus between funds, financial risk management and internal controls. At least one (1) member of this committee to include a financial expert.
- 9.18. Establish budget principles and budget priorities, ensure resources are allocated to achieve desired results, and adopt an annual budget.
- 9.19. For significant capital projects receive regular status reports that set out progress on spending against budget, achievement of key milestones and risks related to delivering the project on time, on budget and against project specifications.
- 9.20. Receive a listing of the tenders for contracted work.
- 9.21. Receive a listing of all leases and agreements.
- 9.22. Approve allocations of one (1) time exceptional funding.
- 9.23. Establish trustee honoraria and reimbursement.

### **Additional Responsibilities**

The Board Shall:

1. Approve the naming or re-naming of schools and other district facilities.

2. Approve district calendar in accordance with legislation and collective agreements.
3. Approve Board Authority Authorized Courses.
4. Recognize students, staff and community members.
5. Approve contracts and agreements as required by legislation.
6. Review the student enrolment and staffing report.
7. Hear unresolved student or staff complaints of discrimination or harassment that cannot be heard by the superintendent.
8. Approval and cessation of academies and programs of choice and changes in fees.
9. Ratify Memoranda of Agreement with Bargaining units.
10. Review and approve district expense rates annually.
11. Review board compensation formula.
12. Approve catchment areas for schools and district programs.
13. Approve changes in grade configurations.
14. Approve the reopening of a closed school.

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 74, 74.1, 75, 75.1, 76.1, 76.3, 76.4, 77. 79.2, 82, 82.1, 84, 85, 86, 96, 112, 112.1, 113, 145, 147, 158 *School Act*

**Facilitated Board Self-Evaluation Process**  
School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

## **PROCESS**

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The annual externally facilitated board self-evaluation process shall be completed subsequent to the superintendent evaluation process described in the appendixes to Policy 12 and entitled, *Superintendent/CEO Evaluation Process, Criteria and Timelines*. The two (2) evaluation processes are complementary in nature.

## **PURPOSE**

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The purpose of the facilitated board self-evaluation is to answer the following questions:

1. How well have we fulfilled each of our defined roles as a board during the evaluation period?
2. How do we perceive our interpersonal working relationships?
3. How well do we receive input and how well do we communicate with those we represent?
4. How would we rate our board / superintendent relations?
5. How well have we adhered to our governance policies?
6. What have we accomplished this past year to improve student learning? How do we know? What else have we accomplished this past year?
7. What actions shall the board take during the next year to become more effective?
8. Determine what board development has been accessed during the past year and what board development is planned for the coming year.

The answers to these questions provide the data for the development of a positive path forward.

## **EVALUATION PRINCIPLES**

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The following principles form the basis for the board self-evaluation process.

1. A learning organization is focused on the improvement of student learning.
2. A commitment to continuous improvement is a sign of organizational health.
3. An effective evaluation process provides for growth and accountability.
4. The annual board evaluation process shall model the board's commitment to principles 1-3.
5. A pre-determined process for evaluation strengthens the governance function, builds credibility for the board and fosters an excellent board / superintendent relationship.
6. An evidence-based approach provides objectivity to supplement the subjectivity involved in evaluation processes.

## CONTEXT

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The board has chosen to retain the nine (9) areas of responsibility articulated in Policy 2 in order to carry out their governance role. These include:

1. Accountability to the Provincial Government
2. Development and Maintaining a Culture of Student Learning
3. Accountability to and Engagement of Community
4. Strategic Planning
5. Policy
6. Board / Superintendent Relations
7. Political Advocacy/Influence
8. Board Development
9. Fiscal Accountability

The annual facilitated board self evaluation process is focused on board performance in relation to these nine (9) areas.

## Policy 3

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### ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

Trustees are elected in accordance with the *Local Government Act*. The British Columbia *School Act* prescribes eligibility requirements for running for the office of school trustee. The Board of Education of School District No. 71 is a corporate body elected by citizens of the Comox Valley.

The role of the trustee is to contribute to the board as it carries out its legislated mandate. The oath of office taken by each trustee when they assume office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public education. A trustee must first and foremost be concerned with the interests of the school board.

The Board of Education is a corporation. The decisions of the board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. The *School Act* gives no individual authority to trustees. As members of the corporate board, trustees are accountable to the public for the collective decisions of the board, and for the delivery and quality of educational services. A trustee must serve the community as an elected representative, but the trustee's primary task is to act as a member of a corporate board. School board trustees collectively and individually have a public duty to carry out their responsibilities and the work of the board in good faith and with reasonable diligence. Trustees have one (1) overarching responsibility – a shared public duty to advance the work of the school board. A trustee's fiduciary duties are owed to the school board (not to themselves, their family or friends) which is, in turn, accountable to the electorate.

The trustee must balance the governance role with the representative role participating in decision making that benefits the whole district while representing the interest of their community.

A trustee who is given corporate authority to act on behalf of the board may carry out duties individually but only as an agent of the board. In such cases, the actions of the trustee are those of the board, which is then responsible for them. A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the district.

#### Trustee Rights

Within the parameters of board policy and bylaws, trustees have a right to:

1. Voice opinions and perspectives in an open and respectful manner, and have such opinions and perspectives respected by fellow trustees and district staff;
2. Represent the interests of their constituents while maintaining a district-wide perspective;
3. Vote on issues free from pressure or lobbying by other trustees and/or district staff;
4. Receive remuneration and expense allowances as determined by the board and in compliance with the *School Act*;
5. Be provided with an orientation session when newly elected;

6. Request and receive information from the superintendent of schools or designate pertinent to district policy and operations; previous, current or pending board or board committee activities; and any other legitimate assistance pertaining to the role of the trustee or the business of the board; and,
7. Attend well-organized and purposeful meetings.

### **Trustee Roles and Responsibilities**

Within the parameters of board policy and bylaws, trustees have a responsibility to:  
Make a prescribed oath of office,

1. Attend meetings of the board; participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the board in order to provide the best solutions possible for the education of children within the district.

*Note: The School Act indicates, 52 (2) If a trustee is continuously absent from board meetings for a period of three (3) consecutive months, unless the absence is because of illness or with the leave of the board, the office of the member is deemed to be vacant and the person who held the office is disqualified from holding office as a trustee until the next general school election.*

2. Be aware of and knowledgeable about the issues that require board decisions and attend orientation sessions for new trustees conducted by district staff and the B.C. School Trustees' Association (BCSTA).
3. Commit to the importance of the public education system in a democratic society.
4. Adhere to the direction of the chair of the board, and chair of a board committee, while attending meetings.
5. Adhere to confidentiality requirements regarding personnel and property issues as well as other matters discussed and determined at in-camera meetings.
6. Respect that the chair of the board or appropriate district staff communicate on behalf of the board, and when making statements to the media, PACs or employee groups make it clear that these are individual statements only and not necessarily the opinion of the board.
7. Become familiar with district policies, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate in board business.
8. Support a majority vote of the board to advance the work of the board and monitor progress to ensure decisions are implemented.
9. Refer governance queries, issues and problems not covered by board policy to the board for corporate discussion and decision.
10. Refer administrative matters to the superintendent.
11. Trustee contacts with staff shall be through the superintendent.

12. The trustee, upon receiving a complaint or an inquiry from a parent, staff member or community member about operations, will refer the parent, staff member or community member back to the teacher, principal, or district office personnel and will inform the superintendent of this action.
13. Keep the board and the superintendent informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the district.
14. Provide the superintendent with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
15. Attend external committee meetings or meetings as a board representative, as assigned, and report to the board in a timely manner.
16. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined terms of reference in a responsible and effective way.
17. Participate in board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the district can be enhanced.
18. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the board and the district.
19. Continue to carry out duties with integrity and responsibility during an election period.
20. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.

### **Trustee Orientation**

As a result of elections, the board may experience changes in membership. To ensure continuity and facilitate a smooth transition from one board to the next following an election, trustees must be adequately briefed concerning existing board policy and practice, statutory requirements, initiatives and approved plans.

The board believes an orientation program is necessary for effective trusteeship.

1. The district will offer an orientation program for all trustees following an election that provides information on:
  - 1.1 Role of the trustee and the board;
  - 1.2 Organizational structures and procedures of the district;
  - 1.3 Board policy, agendas and minutes;
  - 1.4 Existing district initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;
  - 1.5 District programs and services;
  - 1.6 Board's function as an appeal body;

- 1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest; and
- 1.8 Trustee remuneration and expenses.
2. The district will provide financial support for trustees to attend British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) sponsored orientation seminars.
3. The board chair and superintendent are responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the district's orientation program for trustees. The superintendent shall ensure each trustee has access to the Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Procedures Manual at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the board following a by-election.

Legal Reference: Sections 49, 50, 52, 65, 85 *School Act*  
Local Government Act  
A Guide for School Trustee Candidates 2018 BCSTA

**SERVICES, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT  
PROVIDED TO TRUSTEES**

The following shall be made available to trustees upon their election to the board:

**Equipment**

- Ipad
- Cell phone or the option to use their own and receive a monthly phone allowance

**Services**

- Technology support

District equipment shall be considered the property of the district and shall be returned to the district at the conclusion of the term of office. Should the trustee wish to purchase the equipment at the end of their term this may be done at the discounted value.

## Policy 4

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### TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

Trustees as members of the corporate Board of Education shall act prudently, ethically and legally, in keeping with the requirements of provincial legislation. This includes proper use of authority and appropriate decorum in terms of group and individual behaviour.

#### Guidelines and Procedures

##### 1. *Integrity and Dignity of the Office*

Trustees of the Board Shall:

- 1.1 Discharge their duties loyally, faithfully, impartially and in a manner, that will inspire public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the board;
- 1.2 Act as a trustee of this district and work carefully to ensure that it is well maintained, fiscally secure, and operating in the best interest of those we serve;
- 1.3 Recognize that the expenditure of school board funds is a public trust and endeavour to see that the funds are expended efficiently in the best interests of students in the district;
- 1.4 Work together with fellow trustees to communicate to the electorate accurate information about the district and our schools;
- 1.5 Do their utmost to attend regular board meetings, meetings of the board committees to which they have been appointed, and meetings for which they have been appointed to serve as board representatives;
- 1.6 Provide leadership to the community through setting goals and policies for district operations and educational programs and by regularly evaluating to determine if intended results are achieved; and
- 1.7 Not use the position of trustee for personal advantage or to the advantage of any other individual apart from the total interest of the district, and resist outside pressure to so use the position.

##### 2. *Compliance with Legislation*

Trustees of the Board Shall:

- 2.1. Observe bylaws and rules of order, the policies and procedures of the district, and the laws, rules and regulations governing education in British Columbia; and
- 2.2. Respect and understand the roles and duties of the individual trustees, board of education, superintendent of schools and the chair of the board.

### 3. *Civil Behaviour*

Trustees of the Board Shall:

- 3.1. Represent the board of education responsibly in all board-related matters and act with decorum at all times. (Decorum: behaviour that is controlled, calm, and polite);
- 3.2. Work with fellow trustees, the superintendent of schools and the district as a whole, in a spirit of respect, openness, harmony and co-operation, encouraging the free exchange of diverse views on any topic at all times and expressing any contrary opinions in a respectful and constructive manner;
- 3.3. Not make disparaging remarks in or outside board meetings, about other board members or their opinions, and be respectful of staff, students and the public;
- 3.4. Use social media responsibly, including an acknowledgment that opinions expressed are those of the individual not the board.

### 4. *Upholding Decisions*

Trustees of the Board Shall:

- 4.1. Base their decisions on all available facts, data and perspectives of an issue, respect the opinions of others and diligently pursue what they believe to be in the best interest of the students and others of the district;
- 4.2. Accept that authority rests with the board and that no trustee has individual authority to direct district staff other than that delegated by the board;
- 4.3. Uphold publicly the majority decisions of the board of education and the implementation of any board resolutions; and
- 4.4. Accept that the chair of the board is the spokesperson to the public on behalf of the board, unless otherwise determined by the board. No other trustee shall speak on behalf of the board unless expressly authorized by the chair of the board or board to do so. When individual trustees express their opinions in public, they must make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the board.

### 5. *Respect for Confidentiality*

Trustees of the Board Shall:

- 5.1. Keep confidential any information disclosed or discussed at a meeting of the board or committee of the board, or part of a meeting of the board or committee of the board that was closed (in-camera) to the public, and keep confidential the substance of deliberations of a meeting closed (in-camera) to the public unless required to divulge such information by law or authorized by the board to do so;
- 5.2. Not use confidential information for personal gain or to the detriment of the board or district; and

- 5.3. Not divulge confidential information, including personal information about an identifiable individual or information subject to lawyer-client privilege that a trustee becomes aware of because of their position, except when required by law or authorized by the board to do so.

Legal Reference: Sections 49, 50, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 65, 85, 94, 95 *School Act*

## TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT SANCTIONS

1. Trustees shall conduct themselves in an ethical and prudent manner in compliance with the Trustee Code of Conduct, Policy 4. The failure by trustees to conduct themselves in compliance with this policy may result in the board instituting sanctions.

### Code of Conduct Sanctions other than a Failure of Security

2. A trustee who believes that a fellow trustee has violated the Code of Conduct may seek resolution of the matter through appropriate conciliatory measures prior to commencing an official complaint under the Code of Conduct.
3. Conciliatory measures will normally include:
  - 3.1 The trustee who believes a violation has occurred will engage in an individual private conversation with the trustee affected.
  - 3.2 Failing resolution through the private conversation the parties will engage the board chair, vice-chair to gain resolution. If the concern is with the board chair, the concern is to be raised with the vice-chair.
  - 3.3 The chair and at the chair's option the chair and vice-chair will attempt to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the trustees involved.
4. A trustee who wishes to commence an official complaint, under the Code of Conduct shall file a letter of complaint with the board chair within thirty (30) days of the alleged event occurring and indicate the nature of the complaint and the section or sections of the Code of Conduct that are alleged to have been violated by the trustee. The trustee who is alleged to have violated the Code of Conduct and all other trustees shall be forwarded a copy of the letter of complaint by the board chair, or where otherwise applicable in what follows, by the vice-chair, within five (5) days of receipt by the board chair of the letter of complaint. If the complaint is with respect to the conduct of the board chair, the letter of complaint shall be filed with the vice-chair.
5. When a trustee files a letter of complaint, and a copy of that letter of complaint is forwarded to all trustees; the filing, notification, content and nature of the complaint shall be deemed to be strictly confidential, the public disclosure of which shall be deemed to be a violation of the Code of Conduct. Public disclosure of the complaint and any resulting decision taken by the board may be disclosed by the board chair only at the direction of the board, following the disposition of the complaint by the board at a Code of Conduct hearing.
6. To ensure that the complaint has merit to be considered and reviewed, at least one (1) other trustee must provide to the board chair within three (3) days of the notice in writing of the complaint being forwarded to all trustees, a letter indicating support for having the complaint heard at a Code of Conduct hearing. Any trustee who forwards such a letter of support shall not be disqualified from attending at and deliberating upon, the complaint at

a Code of Conduct hearing convened to hear the matter, solely for having issued such a letter.

7. Where no letter supporting a hearing is received by the board chair in the three (3) day period referred to in section 5 above, the complaint shall not be heard. The board chair shall notify all other trustees in writing that no further action of the board shall occur.
8. Where a letter supporting a hearing is received by the board chair in the three (3) day period referred to in section 5 above, the board chair shall convene, as soon as is reasonable, a closed (in-camera) meeting of the board to allow the complaining trustee to present their views of the alleged violation of the Code of Conduct.
9. At the closed (in-camera) meeting of the board, the board chair shall indicate, at the commencement of the meeting, the nature of the business to be transacted.

Without limiting what appears below, the board chair shall ensure fairness in dealing with the complaint by adhering to the following procedures:

- 9.1 The Code of Conduct complaint shall be heard at a Code of Conduct hearing, at a closed (in-camera) board meeting convened for that purpose. All preliminary matters, including whether one (1) or more trustees may have a conflict of interest in hearing the presentations regarding the complaint, shall be dealt with prior to the presentation of the complaint on behalf of the complaining trustee.
- 9.2 The sequence of the Code of Conduct hearing shall be:
  - 9.2.1 The complaining trustee shall provide a presentation which may be written or oral or both;
  - 9.2.2 The respondent trustee shall provide a presentation which may be written or oral or both;
  - 9.2.3 The complaining trustee shall then be given an opportunity to reply to the respondent trustee's presentation;
  - 9.2.4 The respondent trustee shall then be provided a further opportunity to respond to the complaining trustee's presentation and subsequent remarks;
  - 9.2.5 The remaining trustees of the board shall be given the opportunity to ask questions of both parties;
  - 9.2.6 The complaining trustee shall be given the opportunity to make final comments; and
  - 9.2.7 The respondent trustee shall be given the opportunity to make final comments.
- 9.3 Following the presentation of the respective positions of the parties, the parties and all persons other than the remaining trustees who do not have a conflict of interest shall be required to leave the room, and the remaining trustees shall deliberate in private, without assistance from administration, other than the continuing presence of the secretary treasurer, shall remain in compliance. The board may, however, in

its discretion, call upon legal advisors to assist them on points of law or the drafting of a possible resolution(s).

- 9.4 If the remaining trustees in deliberation require further information or clarification, the parties shall be reconvened and the requests made in the presence of both parties. If the information is not readily available, the presiding chair may request a recess or, if necessary, an adjournment of the Code of Conduct hearing to a later date.
- 9.5 In the case of an adjournment, no discussion by trustees whatsoever of the matters heard at the Code of Conduct hearing may take place until the meeting is reconvened.
- 9.6 The remaining trustees in deliberation may draft a resolution(s) indicating what action, if any, may be taken regarding the respondent trustee.
- 9.7 The presiding chair shall reconvene the parties to the Code of Conduct hearing.
- 9.8 All documentation that is related to the Code of Conduct hearing shall be returned to the superintendent immediately upon conclusion of the Code of Conduct hearing and shall be retained in accordance with legal requirements.
- 9.9 The presiding chair shall call for a resolution(s) to be placed before the board.
- 9.10 The presiding chair shall declare the closed (in-camera) board meeting adjourned.
10. A violation of the Code of Conduct may result in the board instituting, without limiting what follows, any or all of the following sanctions:
  - 10.1 Having the board chair write a letter of censure marked “personal and confidential” to the offending trustee, on the approval of a majority of those trustees present and allowed to vote at the closed (in-camera) meeting of the board;
  - 10.2 Having a motion of censure passed by a majority of those trustees present and allowed to vote at the closed (in-camera) meeting of the board;
  - 10.3 Having a motion to remove the offending trustee from one (1), some or all board committees or other appointments of the board passed by a majority of those trustees present and allowed to vote at the closed (in-camera) meeting of the board.
  - 10.4 Having a motion to remove the offending trustee from one (1), some or all board committees or other appointments of the board passed by a majority of those trustees present and allowed to vote at the public meeting of the board.
11. The board may, in its discretion, make public its findings where the board has not upheld the complaint alleging a violation of the Trustee’s Code of Conduct or where there has been a withdrawal of the complaint or under any other circumstances that the board deems reasonable and appropriate to indicate publicly its disposition of the complaint.

## Failure of Security

12. The Trustee Code of Conduct requires that trustees shall respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature. Failure to comply with this requirement constitutes a failure of security. An individual trustee may bring a suspected breach of security to the attention of the board, at a closed (in-camera) meeting of the board. If by majority vote the board agrees that a failure has occurred, the failure shall be recorded by the board and the following procedure shall be invoked:
  - 12.1 The board chair shall request that the superintendent (as head of the district under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*), appoint an independent investigator to review this matter. This request may occur only after such a motion has been discussed and agreed to by a majority of trustees present at a closed (in-camera) meeting of the board. This decision shall immediately be approved in a public meeting of the board.
  - 12.2 The independent investigator shall conduct an investigation and submit a report of findings and recommendations to the board chair and to the superintendent.
  - 12.3 The board chair shall present at a closed (in-camera) meeting of the board, the report of the independent investigator. At this time, the trustee in question shall have an opportunity to present any additional, relevant information.
  - 12.4 If it is determined by a majority vote of the board that a willful violation of security has occurred, for a first occurrence, a motion to write a letter of censure marked "Personal and Confidential" is required to be discussed and agreed upon by a majority of trustees present at a closed (in-camera) meeting of the board. This decision requires immediate approval by a majority vote of trustees at a public meeting of the board.
  - 12.5 For subsequent occurrences, a motion of censure against the trustee in question may be brought directly to a public meeting of the board. This motion shall be approved by a majority vote of trustees present at such a meeting.

Legal Reference: Sections 49, 50, (Part 5 Sections 55-64), 65, 85, 94, 95 *School Act*

## Policy 5

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### ROLE OF THE BOARD CHAIR

The Board of Education shall at its inaugural meeting and subsequently at each annual meeting or at anytime determined by the board, *elect* one (1) of its members to serve as board chair, to hold office at the pleasure of the board.

The chair has no authority to either make decisions beyond policy created by the board or to supervise or direct staff.

#### Specific Responsibilities

The board delegates and assigns to the chair the following powers and duties:

1. Prior to each board meeting, meet with the vice-chair, the superintendent and secretary treasurer to determine the items to be included in the agenda, and to become thoroughly familiar with them.
2. To preside over all public board meetings and ensure that such meetings are conducted in accordance with the *School Act*, the bylaws, and policies as established by the board.
3. To perform the following duties during board meetings:
  - 3.1 Maintain the order and proper conduct and decorum of the meeting so that motions may be formally debated;
  - 3.2 Ensure that issues being presented for the board's consideration are clearly articulated and explained.
  - 3.3 Display firmness, courtesy, tact, impartiality and willingness to give everyone an opportunity to speak on the subject under consideration in order that a board decision can be reached
  - 3.4 Direct the discussion by trustees to the topic being considered by the board.
  - 3.5 Decide questions of order and procedure, subject to an appeal to the rest of the board. The board chair may speak to points of order in preference to other members and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the board by any member duly moved. The chair shall conduct all meetings of the board according to the following rules of order firstly, ensuring compliance with the *School Act*; secondly, compliance with the board's own policies and lastly where the *School Act* or the board's own policies do not address the matter, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of meetings, where applicable.
  - 3.6 Determine disposition of each motion by a formal show of hands.
  - 3.7 Extend hospitality to Trustees, officials of the board, the press and members of the public.

4. To convey directly to the superintendent any concerns or questions as are related to the chair by trustees, parents, students or employees which may significantly affect the administration of the district.
5. To be in regular contact with the superintendent to maintain a working knowledge of current issues and events within the district.
6. To bring to the board all matters requiring a corporate decision of the board.
7. To act as chief spokesperson for the board by stating positions consistent with board decisions and policies (except for those instances where the board has delegated this role to another individual or group).
8. To act as an ex-officio non-voting member of all committees appointed by the board.
9. To act as a signing officer for the district.
10. To represent the board, or arrange alternative representation, at board events, meetings with other levels of government or other organizations or at hearings. When representing the board at official meetings or in an official function, the chair is limited to speaking for positions the board has determined through passing motions. The chair will bring back issues to the board for consideration if the board has not yet adopted motions on the matter or provided direction. The chair will share with the board all information from meetings with other levels of government or external organizations at which the chair attended as the board's representative.
11. To ensure that the board engages in regular assessments of its effectiveness as a board.
12. Following consultation with trustees recommend to the board trustee appointments to:
  - 12.1 Standing committees
  - 12.2 School liaison appointments;
  - 12.3 Representative to organization; and
  - 12.4 Other board committees.
13. Address inappropriate behaviour on the part of a trustee as per policy 4 sanctions.
14. Assist with the board orientation program for new trustees.
15. Manage the CEO contract on the board's behalf by bringing any relevant matters to the boards attention in a timely manner. In addition, each month the chair shall sign off on the superintendent's expenses as well as vacation and sick leave, days earned, taken and accumulated.
16. Approve expense claims for all trustees except the vice-chair and ensure that the vice-chair's expenses are approved by the finance committee member who is neither the chair or the vice-chair.

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 67, 69, 70, 85 *School Act*

## Policy 6

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### ROLE OF THE VICE-CHAIR

The Board of Education shall at its inaugural meeting and subsequently at each annual meeting or at anytime determined by the board, *elect* one (1) of its members to serve as vice-chair, to hold office at the pleasure of the board.

#### Specific Responsibilities

1. The vice-chair shall act on behalf of the board chair, in the latter's absence and shall have all the duties and responsibilities of the board chair.
2. The vice-chair shall chair all Education Committee Meetings.
3. The vice-chair shall assist the board chair in ensuring that the board operates in accordance with its own policies and procedures and in providing leadership and guidance to the board.
4. Prior to each board meeting, meet with the chair, the superintendent and secretary treasurer to determine the items to be included in the in-camera agenda, and to become thoroughly familiar with them.
5. The vice-chair shall be an alternate signing officer for the district.
6. Approves expense claims for the chair.

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 67, 85 *School Act*

## Policy 7

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### BOARD OPERATIONS

The board's ability to discharge its obligations in an efficient and effective manner is dependent upon the development and implementation of a sound organization design. In order to discharge its responsibilities to the electorate of the district, the board shall hold meetings as often as necessary. A quorum, which is a simple majority of the number of trustees, must be present for every duly constituted meeting.

The board has adopted policies so the business of the board can be conducted in an orderly and efficient manner. All points of procedure not provided for in this Policy Handbook shall be decided in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*.

The board's fundamental obligation is to preserve, if not enhance, the public trust in education, generally, and in the affairs of its operations in particular. Consistent with its objective to encourage the general public to contribute to the educational process, board meetings will be open to the public. Towards this end, the board believes its affairs must be conducted in public to the greatest extent possible.

There are times when BC FOIPPA legislation requires or when the board determines that public interest is best served by private discussion of specific issues in "in-camera" sessions.

In order to carry out its responsibilities effectively, the board will hold periodic meetings of several types. Formal meetings, at which all formal and legal business of the board as a corporate body shall be done, may be designated as Inaugural, regular, or special meetings, or in-camera.

The board has adopted specific policy governing board operation and the conduct of its formal meetings.

#### 1. Board Composition and Elections

1.1 The Board of Education for the school district is comprised of a total of seven (7) trustees selected from the following trustee electoral areas:

- 1.1.1 Two (2) trustees from Trustee Electoral Area 1, being the Corporation of the City of Courtenay;
- 1.1.2 One (1) trustee from Trustee Electoral Area 2, being the Town of Comox;
- 1.1.3 One (1) trustee from Trustee Electoral Area 3, being the Corporation of the Village of Cumberland
- 1.1.4 One (1) trustee from Area 4 – Electoral Area A, being from the Comox Valley Regional District.
- 1.1.5 One (1) trustee from Area 5 – Electoral Area B, being from the Comox Valley Regional District
- 1.1.6 One (1) trustee from Area 6 – Electoral Area C, being from the Comox Valley Regional District

## 2. Inaugural Meetings

- 2.1 After the general local election of trustees in the school district, the secretary treasurer must convene a first meeting of the board within thirty (30) days from the date that the new board begins its term of office. The first order of business shall be to elect a chairperson and vice-chair of the board.
- 2.2 The chair of the inaugural meeting shall be the secretary treasurer until such time as the board chair has been elected.
- 2.3 The secretary treasurer shall announce the results of trustee elections.
- 2.4 The secretary treasurer shall administer the two (2) oaths of office; the Declaration by Trustee and the Oath of Confidentiality before taking their seats on the board.
- 2.5 The secretary treasurer shall call for nominations for board chair (seconding is not required) and conduct a vote by secret ballot in which that person receiving a clear majority cast shall be elected board chair for the ensuing year. If no person receives a clear majority, further ballots shall be taken until the same is achieved or, if after a third ballot a tie shall occur the Board shall recess and reconvene at a time of its choosing in order to conduct a fourth vote.
- 2.6 The chair so elected shall assume the chair for the remainder of the meeting.
- 2.7 The board shall proceed to elect a vice-chair, BC School Trustees Association representative and alternate, and a BC Public School Employers' Association representative and alternate, in the same manner as the election of the chair.
- 2.8 Following the elections, the order of business shall be:
  - 2.8.1 Passage of banking resolutions and appointment of signing officers. These appointments may be amended at a regular board meeting as required.

## 3. Annual Election of Officers of the Board

- 3.1 In years when inaugural meetings are not necessary, the board shall meet at a time, place and location as determined by the board to elect the officers of the board. This will normally be done annually; however, the *School Act* allows an election at any time.
- 3.2 The chair of the meeting shall be the secretary treasurer until such time as the board chair has been elected.
- 3.3 The secretary treasurer shall call for nominations for board chair (seconding is not required) and conduct a vote by secret ballot in which that person receiving a clear majority cast shall be elected board chair for the ensuing year. If no person receives a clear majority, further ballots shall be taken until the same is achieved or, if after a third ballot a tie shall occur the board shall recess and reconvene at a time of its choosing in order to conduct a fourth vote.

- 3.4 The chair so elected shall assume the chair for the remainder of the meeting.
- 3.5 The board shall proceed to elect a vice-chair.

#### 4. **Regular Public Meetings**

- 4.1 Prior to the end of each school year, the board shall establish a schedule of regular public meetings of the board for the ensuing school year. A regular meeting shall be held at least once per month. Additional meetings shall be held as the board may decide.
- 4.2 A quorum of the board for a regular meeting shall be a majority of the trustees holding office at the time of the meeting.
- 4.3 At the appointed time for commencement of a meeting, the chair shall ascertain that a quorum is present before proceeding to the business of the meeting. If a quorum has not been made within one-half (1/2) hour after the appointed time, the meeting shall stand adjourned until the next regular meeting date or until another meeting shall have been called in accordance with this policy.
- 4.4 If, prior to the meeting, the chair and/or the secretary treasurer have received information suggesting there will not be a quorum, the meeting may be cancelled, and attempts will be made to contact all trustees.
- 4.5 Trustees may be allowed to participate in or attend a meeting of the board by telephone or other means of communication if all trustees and other persons participating in or attending the meeting are able to communicate with each other.
- 4.6 If a trustee participates in or attends a meeting of the board by telephone or other means of communication (as provided above), the trustee is to be counted for the purposes of determining a quorum and voting.
- 4.7 The agenda will be set by the Agenda Setting Meeting, which consists of the board chair, vice-chair, superintendent and secretary treasurer, no later than the Monday of the week prior to the public meeting. Items for the agenda are to be submitted to the office of the secretary treasurer by 4:00 p.m. on the Tuesday of the week prior to the board meeting.
- 4.8 Written notice of each meeting, together with the proposed agenda, must be given at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance to each trustee by delivery to the place designated by him or her, or via email. Non-receipt by a trustee shall not void the proceedings.
- 4.9 The agenda will include the following items:
  - 4.9.1 Minutes of the previous meeting
  - 4.9.2 Minutes of any special meetings held since the previous Regular meeting;
  - 4.9.3 Copies of Board Committee reports;
  - 4.9.4 Briefing notes for any items requiring a decision;
  - 4.9.5 Copies of information items;
  - 4.9.6 Notice or items of new business to be considered;
  - 4.9.7 Copies of board correspondence to be considered.

4.10 The Order of Business at all regular board meetings, unless varied by motion, shall be as follows:

- 4.10.1 Call to Order
- 4.10.2 Welcome and Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory
- 4.10.3 Agenda – Changes/Additions
- 4.10.4 Adoption of Agenda
- 4.10.5 Adoption of Minutes of Prior Meetings
- 4.10.6 Report on In-Camera Meeting
- 4.10.7 Presentation/Delegation
- 4.10.8 Announcements
  - 4.10.8.1 Board Chair
  - 4.10.8.2 Superintendent
- 4.10.9 Education Committee Report
- 4.10.10 Standing Committee Reports
- 4.10.11 Decision items
- 4.10.12 Information items
- 4.10.13 Board Business
- 4.10.14 Correspondence
- 4.10.15 Public Question Period
- 4.10.16 Adjournment

4.11 A change to the prescribed order of business may be proposed by any trustee and shall require majority consent, without debate.

4.12 New business shall not be considered at any regular meeting unless it arises directly out of correspondence, reports, or other matters arising during the regular order of business, provided that the members present at any regular meeting of the board may, by unanimous resolution, waive the giving of notice. New business may only be introduced by a member as provided herein through a *Notice of Motion*.

4.13 Referral to a committee of any matter arising during the course of any regular meeting may be made upon resolution of the meeting.

4.14 Minutes shall be kept by the Secretary of the board of all proceedings of the board, with the minutes to be concise and to record decisions, but not the contents of speeches.

4.15 All meetings shall stand adjourned at 9:00 p.m. or two (2) hours after their commencement, whichever comes first. Meetings may be extended to 9:30 pm or an additional 30 mins by a majority vote by those present in favour of the extension. Meetings may continue past 9:30 pm or the 30 mins extension provided that all the members present at the meeting unanimously resolved continuation. No meeting shall continue past 11:00 pm.

4.16 All regular public meetings of the board shall be open to the public and to the media and no person shall be excluded except for improper conduct.

4.17 The presiding officer may expel and exclude from a board meeting, any person whom they consider has been guilty of improper conduct.

- 4.18 If, in the opinion of the board, the public interest so requires, the board may order a meeting or part thereof to be closed (in-camera) to the public to discuss topics pertinent to that meeting and may exclude persons other than trustees and officers.
- 4.19 Fifteen (15) minutes will be set aside on each regular Board Meeting Agenda to give members of the public an opportunity to ask questions to the board.
- 4.19.1 The board welcomes questions of a general nature, but the primary purpose of the "Public Question Period" is to ask questions about the board's policies or operations. The Question Period is not a platform for presentations or personal statements
- 4.19.2 The chairperson may refer the question to a senior staff member or to the appropriate board committee chairperson. Whenever possible, the questions will be answered immediately. If not, it will be deferred to a later date when all the information is available
- 4.20 A review of board operations, procedures and policies will be conducted at a time and place to be determined by the board.

## 5. **Public Participation**

### **Preamble:**

The board welcomes and provides for a variety of forms of public participation by members of the community. Public participation may be through presentations by a delegation, through formal question/comment periods in regular board meetings or in the form of written communications. Such opportunities shall not be used to address matters which must be dealt with in Closed (in-camera) meetings as noted elsewhere in this policy. For example, individual student matters must not be dealt with in a public setting. In addition, structures have been defined in legislation and collective agreements to deal with labour management issues. The public participation opportunities noted below are not to be used to deal with such matters. The board respects and honors employee groups' contracts and official representatives and will therefore deal with labour management issues through defined legislated and collective agreement processes.

### 5.1 **Presentation**

- 5.1.1 Requests to make a presentation before the board shall be submitted to the office of the secretary treasurer by 4:00 p.m. on the Monday of the week prior to the scheduled board meeting.
- 5.1.2 After the scheduled presentation, board members may ask questions. Except in extraordinary circumstances, no formal response will be given until a later date.
- 5.1.3 Presentations at regular meetings may include objective criticism of school operations and/or programs but may not include complaints about school personnel or other persons.

- 5.1.4 Speakers shall be allotted fifteen (15) minutes for a presentation, although the time allotment may be extended up to an additional fifteen (15) minutes more by a majority vote of the board.

## 5.2 Delegations:

The following guidelines will govern groups or individuals wishing to be heard as a delegation.

- 5.2.1 A delegation is a group or individual requesting permission to appear before the board to speak on a matter relating to the business of the board. Requests to appear as a delegation must be submitted in writing six (6) calendar days prior to a scheduled meeting. The request must outline the purpose of the delegation.
  - 5.2.2 Normally, a delegation representing a group previously heard on a topic will not be heard a second time unless the delegation presents, in advance, material or information not previously considered that is germane to any decision. A motion of the board to hear the delegation must be passed by having a majority of all its members cast an affirmative vote.
  - 5.2.3 Delegations will be limited to five (5) minutes duration, with a brief question period available for trustees at the conclusion.
  - 5.2.4 Any written material to be provided to trustees in conjunction with a delegation must be made available to the school board office by the Thursday afternoon preceding the meeting. Fifteen (15) copies are required. If the material provided must be returned following the meeting, this must be specified at the time it is provided.
  - 5.2.5 Decisions on requests made by a delegation are not normally made at the meeting at which the delegation is heard. However, if the board believes the matter is emergent, it may consider the matter during the new business portion of the meeting.
  - 5.2.6 Groups or individuals wishing to be heard as a delegation must be present at the meeting by 7:00 p.m. They may leave the meeting once their business is concluded but are welcome to remain should they so desire.
- 5.3 Any special arrangements required must be made at the time the request to appear is submitted.

## 5.4 Question Periods

During the Question Period section of the Agenda, individuals may ask a question and supplemental questions of the chair on school board matters. The total time for each question, including supplemental questions and the response is five (5) minutes.

## 6. Special Meetings

- 6.1 A special meeting of the board may be called by the chair, or upon written request by a majority of the trustees, shall be called by the secretary treasurer. No business other than that for which the meeting was called shall be conducted at the meeting.
- 6.2 Written notice of a special meeting and an agenda shall be given to each trustee at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. Delivery of a written notice and the agenda may be waived by resolution, provided all reasonable steps have been taken to notify all trustees of the meeting.

## 7. **Closed In-Camera Meetings**

- 7.1 The board may convene a meeting without the public, or without the public and staff present, at which matters of a confidential nature shall be discussed. No trustee shall disclose to the public, the proceedings of a closed (in-camera) meeting unless a resolution has been passed at the closed meeting to allow disclosure.
- 7.2 Minutes of a closed (in-camera) meeting shall be kept in the same manner as a regular meeting but shall be approved only by the board in a closed (in-camera) meeting and shall not be filed with the minutes of the regular meetings.
- 7.3 A general summary of matters discussed, and the nature of decisions made at in-camera meetings shall be prepared following each meeting and, after approval of the in-camera meeting minutes, this statement will be attached to the agenda of the regular meeting immediately following.
- 7.4 Unless otherwise determined by the board, the following matters shall be considered in a closed (in-camera) meeting:
  - 7.4.1 Student disciplinary cases;
  - 7.4.2 Information regarding appointment, employment or dismissal of an employee;
  - 7.4.3 Matters of collective negotiations with employees;
  - 7.4.4 Matters related to the purchase or sale of land;
  - 7.4.5 Matters of a personal nature that are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
  - 7.4.6 Such other matters where the board decides that the public interest so requires.
- 7.5 Notwithstanding any rule limiting reconsiderations of the agenda, a trustee may make a motion to move a matter from the agenda of a closed (in-camera) meeting or session to the agenda of the open meeting, or the reverse. The motion requires a seconder, is debatable, and requires a simple majority in order for the matter to be considered in a closed (in-camera) meeting.

## 8. Presiding Officers

- 8.1 If the chair is absent, or unable to act, the vice-chair shall preside at meetings of the board. If the vice-chair is absent or unable to act, the members shall elect one (1) of their number to preside at the meeting.
- 8.2 The chair may vacate the chair in order to enter debate or propose or second a motion, in which case the vice-chair, if present or another member appointed by the chair shall preside until the issue is disposed of (which seldom should be done).
- 8.3 In the event that neither the chairperson nor the vice-chairperson are able or willing to take the chair, the presiding officer shall be such person as the board may elect for that meeting.
- 8.4 The chair shall rule on all points of order and shall state their reasons and the authority for ruling when making a ruling. The chair's ruling shall be subject to appeal to the board. An appeal may only be requested immediately after a ruling and before resumption of business.
- 8.5 In discussing matters with a delegation, the chair of the board shall act as spokesperson.

## 9. Rules of Order

- 9.1 The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern points of order and procedures not provided for in the *School Act* or in this Policy Handbook. Where there is an inconsistency between the *School Act* and this Policy Handbook, the *School Act* shall apply.
- 9.2 The board may adopt a procedural rule for one (1) meeting by resolution approved by majority vote of the trustees present at the meeting.
- 9.3 A rule other than the requirement for notice of meetings may be suspended for one (1) meeting by unanimous consent of the trustees' present.
- 9.4 This policy may be amended by resolution of at least majority vote of the entire board approving the amendment. Notice of intention to propose the amendment must be given at the previous meeting and Trustees must be given at least forty-eight (48) hours' notice.
- 9.5 The presiding officer's ruling on a point of order shall be based on rules of order as stated in s9.1.
- 9.6 An appeal of a ruling of the presiding officer shall be decided without debate by a majority vote of trustees' present. The challenger and the presiding officer have the right to state briefly the reason for their positions. When an appeal is successful it does not necessarily set a precedent.
- 9.7 A copy of the Board Policy Handbook shall be available for inspection at all reasonable times by any person.

## 10. **Bylaws**

10.1 The board shall not give a bylaw more than two (2) readings at any one (1) meeting unless the members of the board who are present at the meeting unanimously agree to give the bylaw three (3) readings at that meeting. The following matters shall be dealt with only by bylaw:

- 10.1.1 Adoption of the budget;
- 10.1.2 A capital bylaw;
- 10.1.3 The acquisition or disposal of property;
- 10.1.4 Amendments to bylaws;
- 10.1.5 Where required by the *School Act*.

10.2 Written notice of intention to propose a bylaw shall be given in the notice of the meeting where the bylaw is to be proposed.

10.3 Every bylaw shall be dealt with in the following stages:

- 10.3.1 First reading – no debate or amendment;
- 10.3.2 Second reading - discussion of the principle of the bylaw;
- 10.3.3 Third reading – consideration of amendments and final decision.

10.4 The secretary treasurer shall certify on a copy of each bylaw, the readings and the times thereof and the context of any amendment passed.

10.5 A proposed bylaw or amendment may be withdrawn at any stage with unanimous consent of the board.

## 11. **Motions**

11.1 Unless expressly required to be exercised by bylaw, all powers of the board shall be exercised by resolution (motion).

11.2 A motion, when introduced, brings business before the meeting for possible action. A motion shall be worded in a concise, unambiguous and complete form and, if lengthy or complex, shall be submitted in writing.

11.3 The presiding officer may divide a motion containing more than one (1) subject and it shall be voted on in the form in which it is divided.

11.4 All motions shall be seconded.

11.5 All motions are debatable except the following:

- 11.5.1 Motion to call the question;
- 11.5.2 Motion for adjournment of debate or for adjournment of a meeting unless such a motion contains a time for recommencement of debate or for a new meeting;
- 11.5.3 Motion to fix time for adjournment of a meeting;
- 11.5.4 Motion to proceed to the next business;

- 11.5.5 Motion to go into closed (in-camera) session.
- 11.6 An amendment is a motion to modify the wording of a pending motion. An amendment must be germane, i.e. closely related to or having a bearing on the subject of the motion to be amended. A motion can be amended more than once; however, there can only be one (1) amendment on the floor at a time and it shall be dealt with before another amendment is presented, or the motion is decided. An amendment to an amendment must be germane to the first amendment and cannot be amended.
- 11.7 All motions shall be subject to amendment except the following:
  - 11.7.1 Motion that the question be now put;
  - 11.7.2 Motion for adjournment of debate or adjournment of a meeting;
  - 11.7.3 Motion to table unless such a motion contains a date for further consideration of the matter tabled;
  - 11.7.4 Motion to refer to committee;
  - 11.7.5 Motion to proceed to next business.

## 12. **Reconsideration and Rescind**

- 12.1 A motion that has been defeated at a previous meeting can be moved again at a subsequent meeting only if the mover had previously voted on the prevailing side.
- 12.2 Motions to rescind a motion previously adopted can be considered only if notice has been given at a previous meeting or in the call for the present meeting and if no action has been taken which it is too late to undo. Such motions are debatable. There is no time limit for these motions, and they can be moved by any member. A majority vote is required for approval.

## 12. **Debate**

- 13.1 Debate shall be strictly relevant to the motion before the meeting and no trustee shall speak for more than five (5) minutes at one time. The presiding officer shall warn speakers who violate this rule or who persist in tedious or repetitious debate.
- 13.2 Speakers shall be recognized by the chair and shall address all remarks to the chair.
- 13.3 Each trustee has the right to speak twice on the same question on the same day but cannot make a second speech if any trustee who has not spoken on that question desired to speak.
- 13.4 A point of privilege (a matter dealing with the rights or interests of the board as a whole or of a trustee personally), may be raised at any time and shall be dealt with forthwith before resumption of business.
- 13.5 No trustee shall interrupt another trustee who has the floor except to raise a point of order, a point of privilege, or to disclose a conflict of interest.

## 14. **Voting**

- 14.1 All trustees present at a meeting must vote on each issue unless they are in a conflict of interest or abstain.
- 14.2 If a trustee has a conflict of interest, they must abstain from voting and the quorum will not be affected.
- 14.3 Any declared conflicts of interest shall be recorded.
- 14.4 Voting shall be by show of hands unless otherwise provided in board policy.
- 14.5 All questions shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the trustees present and voting, save as otherwise provided for in Board Policy Handbook or the *School Act*.

## 15. **Minutes**

The board shall maintain and preserve by means of minutes a record of its proceedings and resolutions.

### 15.1 The minutes shall record:

- 15.1.1 Date, time and place of meeting;
- 15.1.2 Type of meeting (inaugural, regular or special);
- 15.1.3 Name of presiding officer;
- 15.1.4 Names of those trustees and administration in attendance;
- 15.1.5 Approval of preceding minutes;
- 15.1.6 Only motions will be recorded in the minutes. Preamble, rationale, or discussions will not be recorded in the minutes, unless directed by the board through resolution;
- 15.1.7 Points of order;
- 15.1.8 Appointments;
- 15.1.9 Recommended motions proposed by committees; and,
- 15.1.10 Trustee declaration pursuant to Section 56, 57 or 58 of the *School Act*.

### 15.2 The minutes shall:

- 15.2.1 Be prepared as directed by the superintendent;
- 15.2.2 Be considered an unofficial record of proceedings until such time as adopted by a resolution of the; and
- 15.2.3 Upon adoption by the board, be deemed to be the official and sole record of the board's business.

15.3 The superintendent shall ensure that, upon acceptance by the board, appropriate initials are appended to each page of the minutes, and that appropriate signatures and the corporate seal of the district are affixed to the concluding page of the minutes.

15.4 As part of its ongoing effort to keep staff and the public fully informed concerning its

affairs and actions, the board directs the superintendent to institute and maintain effective and appropriate procedures for the prompt dissemination of information about decisions made at all board meetings.

15.5 The approved minutes of a regular or special meeting shall be posted to the website as soon as possible following approval. The superintendent is responsible to post the approved minutes.

15.6 Upon adoption by the board, the minutes of meetings other than Closed (in-camera) meetings shall be open to public scrutiny.

## 16. **Correspondence**

16.1 Correspondence is at times sent to the board and at other times to individual trustees. Even when correspondence is addressed to an individual trustee the contents may be more appropriately addressed by the corporate board. Where correspondence is addressed to the board or its contents are more appropriately addressed by the corporate board the following processes shall be adhered to. The intended outcomes of these processes are: to ensure board correspondence is acknowledged in a timely fashion, the corporate board is aware of the public input provided and where required, a corporate response is provided in a timely manner.

16.1.1 Where non-routine correspondence is received that appears to require a formal board response, that correspondence shall be placed on the agenda of the next regular board meeting.

16.1.2 Where non-routine correspondence is received that does not appear to require a formal board response, that correspondence, together with any response issued by the superintendent, shall be circulated to the trustees.

16.1.3 Where an individual trustee receives correspondence that in the trustee's judgement is more appropriately a corporate board matter, the correspondence will be directed to the chair who will acknowledge the correspondence, and act in accordance with 16.1.1 or 16.1.2 above.

## 17. **Audio/Video Recording Devices**

17.1 The board requires that anyone wanting to use recording devices at a public board meeting must obtain prior approval of the board chair. This shall be communicated by the board chair at the beginning of the Regular or Special Meeting.

## 18. **Trustee Participation in Meetings through Electronic Means**

A Trustee may participate in a meeting of the board by electronic means or other communication facilities if the electronic means or other communication facilities enable the Trustees participating in the meeting and members of the public attending the meeting to hear each other.

18.1 Trustees participating in a meeting of the board by electronic means or other communication facilities are deemed to be present at the meeting.

- 18.2 The chair of the board may refuse to allow a Trustee to participate in a meeting by electronic means or other communication facilities where the required electronic equipment is not available or where Special meetings are held in private and or for the purpose of hearing appeals or conducting hearings related to employee matters, or any board matters which attract the principles of natural justice.
- 18.3 Notwithstanding the requirements of these procedures, a Trustee cannot attend more than three (3) consecutive Regular meetings of the board electronically without being authorized by resolution of the board to do so.
- 18.4 Trustees who connect to a meeting of the board by video conference, teleconference or other means of electronic transmission will be considered in attendance at the meeting and form part of the quorum.

## 19. Trustee Remuneration

### 19.1 *Recommendation*

- 19.1.1 Effective January 1, 2019 trustee base remuneration shall be \$13,900 with an additional remuneration for the board chair to be \$3,400; and the additional remuneration for the vice-chair to be \$1,700.
- 19.1.2 Annual adjustments of trustee remuneration shall be made July 1 of each year, based on the BC Consumer Price Index change from December 31 of the prior year.

## 20. Trustee Expense Reimbursement

Trustees shall use the prescribed trustee expense form when submitting expenses. This to be submitted to the secretary treasurer, board chair/vice chair for approval.

- 20.1 Reimbursement of expense rates for trustees shall be the same as provided to staff. Such expense rates shall be reviewed and if necessary, adjusted annually as part of the budget setting process.
- 20.2 Expense reimbursements for trustees representing the board on official business shall be handled as follows:

### 20.2.1 *Transportation*

20.2.1.1 The board will pay the following:

- |     |                      |  |
|-----|----------------------|--|
| (a) | <b>Fares:</b>        | All out-of-pocket transportation costs, with air fare being “economy class” where available. |
| (b) | <b>Taxis or bus:</b> | Out-of-pocket expenses for taxis or bus to/from airport, hotel, train, etc.                  |

- (c) **Kilometrage:** The maximum amount claimable at current provincial government rates, plus parking costs necessarily incurred.
- (d) **Ferries:** Car and passenger fares at cost.

Although it is practical to travel by air, trustees or approved employee out of district travel may travel by personal vehicle, provided vehicle kilometrage and incidentally related costs do not exceed economy air fare and associated ground transportation expenses.

#### 20.2.2 *Meals*

20.2.2.1 Each trustee will be reimbursed a per diem pursuant to the provincial government policy for Group 3 employees (refer to section 7 below).

20.2.2.2 This per diem includes gratuities and all other expenses such as dry cleaning, portage, and personal telephone calls.

#### 20.2.3 *Accommodation*

20.2.3.1 The board will reimburse each trustee for the actual cost of reasonable hotel accommodation. Where private accommodation is used, the current provincial rate in lieu of commercial accommodation amount \$25.00 per day may be claimed.

#### 20.2.4 *Registration*

20.2.4.1 The board will pay the travelling trustee any associated registration fees.

#### 20.2.5 *Additional Allowances*

20.2.5.1 In any case not provided for in this regulation, the board may approve by resolution the payment of a special allowance for a special cause.

#### 20.2.6 *Form of Claim*

20.2.6.1 Claims for reimbursement of expenses shall be made on the approved Travel & Expense Warrant—Trustees (Form 653), with receipts attached for other than kilometrage, per diem, and private accommodation.

#### 20.2.7 *BC Provincial Government Travel Allowance*

20.2.7.1 [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/all-employees/pay-and-benefits/work-related-expenses-allowances/travel\\_allowances.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/all-employees/pay-and-benefits/work-related-expenses-allowances/travel_allowances.pdf)

## 21. **Trustee Development Form**

Trustees shall use the prescribed trustee development form, to be submitted to the secretary treasurer and or board chair/vice-chair for approval.

Legal References: 50, 56, 57, 58, 59, 66-71, 71(1), 72 *School Act*  
Financial Disclosure Act  
Income Tax Act

## Policy 7 - Appendix

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### **TRUSTEE ELECTIONS BYLAW** **Board of Education** **School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)** **Trustee Elections Bylaw No. 1C**

A bylaw to provide for the determination of various procedures for the conduct of general school elections and other trustee elections.

#### **Preamble:**

Under the *School Act*, a Board of Education may, by bylaw, determine various procedures and requirements to be applied in the conduct of trustee elections.

In School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), under section 37 of the *School Act*, trustee elections in the following trustee electoral areas are the responsibility of the following authorities:

<b>Trustee Electoral Areas</b>	<b>No. of Trustees</b>	<b>Authority</b>
<i>Area 1 – Corporation of the City of Courtenay</i>	Two	Corporation of the City of Courtenay
<i>Area 2 – Town of Comox</i>	One	Town of Comox
<i>Area 3 – Corporation of the Village of Cumberland</i>	One	Corporation of the Village of Cumberland
<i>Area 4 – Electoral Area A, Comox Valley Regional District</i>	One	Comox Valley Regional District
<i>Area 5 – Electoral Area B, Comox Valley Regional District</i>	One	Comox Valley Regional District
<i>Area 6 – Electoral Area C, Comox Valley Regional District</i>	One	Comox Valley Regional District

Trustee elections which are the responsibility of the school board may be conducted by the school board directly or by a local government under an agreement with the school board made pursuant to section 38 (4) of the *School Act*.

The Board of Education wishes to establish various procedures and requirements under the authority of the *School Act* for trustee elections.

The Board of Education, in an open meeting of the board, enacts as follows:

## 1. Definitions

The terms used shall have the meanings assigned by the *School Act* and the *Local Government Act*, except as the context indicates otherwise.

- “Election” means a trustee election including general school elections and by-elections.
- “Board” or “School Board” means the Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley).

## 2. Application

This bylaw applies to elections carried out by the school board and by other authorities, except as otherwise indicated.

## 3. Resolution of Tie Votes After Judicial Recount

In the event of a tie vote after a judicial recount, the tie vote will be resolved by conducting a lot in accordance with sections 45(1) and 46(4) of the *School Act* and section 151, of the *Local Government Act*.

## 4. Application of Local Government Bylaws

- 4.1 In Trustee Electoral Area 1, the election bylaws of the Corporation of the City of Courtenay, as they may be amended from time to time, apply to the trustee elections conducted by the Corporation of the City of Courtenay except for bylaws determining the minimum number of nominators, the order of names on the ballot, the resolution of tie votes after judicial recount, requiring a nomination deposit or any other matter on which the local government bylaws may not by law apply to a trustee election.
- 4.2 In Trustee Electoral Area 2, the election bylaws of the Town of Comox, as they may be amended from time to time, apply to trustee elections conducted by the Town of Comox except for bylaws determining the minimum number of nominators, the order of names on the ballot, the resolution of tie votes after judicial recount, requiring a nomination deposit or any other matter on which the local government bylaws may not by law apply to a trustee election.
- 4.3 In Trustee Electoral Area 3, the election bylaws of the Corporation of the Village of Cumberland, as they may be amended from time to time, apply to trustee elections conducted by the Corporation of the Village of Cumberland except for bylaws determining the minimum number of nominators, the order of names on the ballot, the resolution of tie votes after judicial recount, requiring a nomination deposit or any other matter on which the local government bylaws may not by law apply to a trustee election.
- 4.4 In Trustee Electoral Area 4, if the Comox Valley Regional District conducts all or a part of the trustee election, the elections bylaws of the Comox Valley Regional District, as they may be amended from time to time, apply to that trustee election or part of the trustee election, except for any bylaws determining the minimum number of nominators, the order of names on the ballot, the resolution of tie votes after

judicial recount, requiring a nomination deposit or any other matter on which the local government bylaws may not by law apply to a trustee election.

4.5 In Trustee Electoral Area 5, if the Comox Valley Regional District conducts all or a part of the trustee election, the elections bylaws of the Comox Valley Regional District, as they may be amended from time to time, apply to that trustee election or part of the trustee election, except for any bylaws determining the minimum number of nominators, the order of names on the ballot, the resolution of tie votes after judicial recount, requiring a nomination deposit or any other matter on which the local government bylaws may not by law apply to a trustee election.

4.6 In Trustee Electoral Area 6, if the Comox Valley Regional District conducts all or a part of the trustee election, the elections bylaws of the Comox Valley Regional District, as they may be amended from time to time, apply to that trustee election or part of the trustee election, except for any bylaws determining the minimum number of nominators, the order of names on the ballot, the resolution of tie votes after judicial recount, requiring a nomination deposit or any other matter on which the local government bylaws may not by law apply to a trustee election.

## 5. **Public Access to Election Documents**

The board authorizes public access to the nomination documents of trustee candidates during regular office hours at the board's office and by posting of nomination documents of trustee candidates on the website of the Board of Education, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) until 30-days after declaration of the election results.

The board authorizes, but does not require, chief election officers to post nomination documents of trustee candidates for public access on any or all of the websites: Corporation of the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Corporation of the Village of Cumberland and Comox Valley Regional District, until such time as established by the bylaws of the relevant local government up to a maximum of 30-days after declaration of election results.

## 6. **Minimum Number of Nominators**

For certainty, the minimum numbers of qualified nominators for a trustee candidate is two (2).

## 7. **Required Advance Voting Opportunities**

7.1 Unless the board is exempted from the requirement by Order of the Minister of Education, an advance voting opportunity will be held on the tenth day before general voting day.

7.2 Unless the board is exempted from the requirement for an additional advance voting opportunity by Order of the Minister of Education an additional advance voting opportunity will be held:

7.2.1 in Trustee Electoral Area 1, on the date specified in the bylaws of the Corporation of the City of Courtenay;

- 7.2.2 in Trustee Electoral Area 2, on the date specified in the bylaws of the Town of Comox; and
- 7.2.3 in Trustee Electoral Area 3, on the date specified in the bylaws of the Corporation of the Village of Cumberland.
- 7.2.4 In Trustee Electoral Areas 4, 5 and 6, for the general school elections, on the date specified in the bylaws of the Comox Valley Regional District as they may be amended from time to time; and for by-elections, 2 days before general voting day.

**8. Additional Advance Voting Opportunities**

The chief election officer is authorized to establish additional advance voting opportunities for each election and to designate the voting places, establish the date and the voting hours for these voting opportunities.

**9. Order of Names of the Ballot**

The order of the names of candidates on the ballot will be as follows:

- 9.1 For Trustee Electoral Area 1, the order of names on the ballot will be determined by lot.
  - 9.2 For Trustee Electoral Area 2, the order of names on the ballot will be determined by lot.
  - 9.3 For Trustee Electoral Area 3, the order of names on the ballot will be alphabetical.
  - 9.4 For Trustee Electoral Areas 4, 5 and 6, the order of names on the ballot will be alphabetical.
10. This Bylaw may be cited for all purposes as “Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) Trustee Elections Bylaw No. 1C.

**11. Repeal**

School District No. 71 Trustee Elections Bylaw No. 1B is hereby repealed.

Read a first time this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018.

Read a second time this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018.

Read a third time finally passed and adopted \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Chair

### BOARD COMMITTEES

As much as possible, the board's business of governance will be conducted by the full board of Education. The board may establish committees of the board when necessary to assist it with governance functions. Committees of the board shall never interfere with delegation of authority from board to superintendent. The board may delegate specific powers and duties to committees of the board that are established by the board, subject to the restrictions on delegation in the *School Act*.

The primary purpose of all committees of the board shall be to act in an advisory capacity to the board. Unless specific powers have been delegated by the board the power of all committees shall be limited to making recommendations to the board and shall not include that of acting on behalf of the board unless specifically authorized for individual issues. The chair of the committee shall place all recommendations before the board at a regular business meeting of the board in the form of a proper motion. No action of any committee of the board shall be binding on the board until the action is formally approved by the board.

A quorum shall be a majority of the trustees appointed to the committee.

#### General Requirements

1. The board may establish Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees and shall prescribe their purpose, powers and duties, membership and meetings.
2. The chair of the board shall be an ex-officio non-voting member of all board committees to which the chair has not been appointed. The board vice-chair may act as ex-officio in the absence of the board chairperson. The board chairperson may take the place of any trustee member or alternate who is absent to complete the committee quorum.
3. The chair of the board shall recommend and the board shall appoint committee chairs and members of any standing or ad hoc committee. The only exception is that the vice-chair shall chair the Education Committee.
4. Committees shall provide written reports to the board on any matters discussed by the committee.

#### Standing Committees

Standing committees consist solely of trustees and are established to assist the board with work of an ongoing or recurring nature. Trustees normally shall be appointed to Standing Committees at the annual Inaugural Meeting and subsequent Annual Meeting to serve at the pleasure of the board, and thereafter, at any time determined by the board.

Standing committees are usually established or confirmed annually at the Inaugural Meeting or subsequent Annual Meeting. The appointed member shall serve on the committee until replaced by a subsequent appointment.

The number of trustees appointed to a committee other than a Committee of the Whole shall not constitute a quorum of the board.

Each standing committee shall establish, at the first meeting of the committee the meeting schedule for the year. The chairperson of the committee may cancel regularly scheduled meetings for proper cause. Proper cause will include insufficient business to require a meeting of the committee. The chairperson of the committee may also call special meetings of the committee not included on the schedule. All board members will receive notification as well as the agenda for any regularly scheduled or special meetings of the committee. The meetings shall be scheduled so that the meeting notes can be received by the secretary treasurer's office eight (8) days prior to the board's regularly scheduled meeting day, to be included in the next board agenda package.

The resource staff assigned to each committee by the superintendent shall keep notes of each committee meeting, prepare the agenda, and distribute material to be considered by the committee.

Committee notes shall be distributed to all members of the board at the board Meeting at which the committee report is given. The chairperson of the standing committee shall determine which portion of the report will be given In-Camera and which portion will be given in Public.

The committee agenda and accompanying material shall be distributed at least two (2) full days before any regular meeting of the committee. A copy of each committee agenda shall be distributed to all members of the board. Items may be added to the committee agenda of any regular or special meeting of the committee at the beginning of each meeting with the consensus of those committee members present.

Committees' rules of order may be relaxed at the discretion of the committee chair to encourage open and in-depth discussion. Speakers must still be recognized, speak no longer than five (5) minutes at one time, stay relevant to the agenda item under consideration, and the chair shall offer speaking priority to those who have not yet participated in each discussion.

Committee recommendations to the board will be reached by consensus. If a single recommendation cannot be agreed upon, the committee chair will ensure the notes reflect the differing points of view.

Committees shall make recommendations to the board in writing, with final wording agreed upon at the committee meeting. No recommendation of any committee shall be binding on the board until the action is formally approved by the board.

## **1. Audit and Finance Committee**

### **1.1 Purpose**

- 1.1.1 The purpose of the committee is to assist the board to oversee and provide a more focused and ongoing board discussion of the district's financial accountability. The focus for fiscal accountability, shall include risk assessment and mitigation strategies, the external audit processes and findings, and monitoring fiscal reporting format to ensure clear communication to the board.

## 1.2 *Powers and Duties*

- 1.2.1 Liaises with the district's Auditor or other financial audit institutions (e.g. Office of the Auditor General) on behalf of the board;
- 1.2.2 Manages the selection of the Auditor, reviewing their services to the district, and their independence letter. and recommending their appointment to the Board of Education;
- 1.2.3 Reviews financial statements and discusses them with the Auditor as required;
- 1.2.4 Ensures the Auditor is providing an adequate level of advice to the district which is agreed and set out in the auditor's terms of engagement;
- 1.2.5 Ensures the terms of engagement recommended to and approved by the board for the external audit, facilitates the board's assessment of the superintendent's fiscal management of the district in relation to any relevant fiscal quality indicators.
- 1.2.6 Meets with the Auditor to approve the audit plan its scope and materiality levels, in light of the board approved terms of engagement.
- 1.2.7 Annually reviews the audit report and management letter and the superintendent's fiscal accountability reports to determine if the fiscal accountability quality indicators have been met and reports findings to the Board of Education;
- 1.2.8 Meets with the Auditor without staff present at the outset and at the conclusion of the Audit.
- 1.2.9 Reviews summary reports on internal compliance audits; these will be reviewed and recommendations made for changes to processes or procedures.
- 1.2.10 Make recommendation to the board re the appointment of the external Audit Committee member.
- 1.2.11 Reviews insurance coverage in terms of meeting mandatory requirements and competitiveness of premiums. In addition, reviews open insurance claims to inform risk management strategies.
- 1.2.12 Reviews risk management and mitigation of risk strategies and the steps management has taken to identify, monitor, control and report such exposures. Risk Management Oversight means identifying and analyzing and managing risks that may prevent the district from achieving its objectives. The committee's oversight responsibilities for risk management is primarily concerned with financial risks that may affect financial reporting.
- 1.2.13 Review with management, the external auditors, and, if necessary, legal counsel any litigation claim or other contingency that could have a material effect upon the financial situation or operation results of the district and the

manner in which these will be disclosed in the financial statements.

- 1.2.14 Review and assess the adequacy of these terms of reference annually and submit any recommended changes to the terms of reference to the board of Education for approval.
- 1.2.15 Review fiscal accountability reports to ensure they provide the board with any significant variances in relation to budget and expenditures, budget/expense projections, status of any significant fiscal administrative issues and identification of any fiscal governance issues and any recommendations.
- 1.2.16 Makes legal, and property recommendations regarding any matters referred to the committee by the board.
- 1.2.17 Review investment parameters.

### 1.3 *Membership*

- 1.3.1 The chair, and two (2) other trustees.
- 1.3.2 Two (2) appointed community non-voting members who is a resident of the school district, not an employee or spouse of an employee and have financial expertise and must sign a non-disclosure agreement.

### 1.4 *Meetings*

- 1.4.1 At least two (2) times annually.

## 2. **Facilities and Properties Committee**

### 2.1 **Purpose/Function**

The purpose of the Facilities Committee is to review and provide recommendations to the Board in regard to assigned facilities planning matters.

### 2.2 **Key Responsibilities**

#### 2.2.1 *Student Enrolment:*

Annually review enrolment and enrolment trends and the potential impact on capital planning, student accommodation and catchment changes.

#### 2.2.2 *Capital Planning:*

Annually review and make recommendations regarding the draft five-year capital plan for submission to the BC Ministry of Education.

## 2.3 Long Range Facilities Plan

2.3.1 Annually review and make recommendations regarding the long-range facilities plan for submission to the BC Ministry of Education.

## 2.4 Facilities Planning Matters Referred to the Committee by the Board

2.4.1 Review matters referred and make recommendations as requested.

## 2.5 Naming and Renaming Schools

2.5.1 Within the constraints of Board direction provided at the outset of any potential school naming or renaming process, provide recommendations to the Board.

## 2.6 School Closures

2.6.1 Review the materials provided by senior staff to the Board regarding a possible school closure and provide a recommendation to the Board as to whether the committee supports the possible closure advancing to the school closure public consultation process phase.

## 2.7 Membership

The Facilities Committee will consist of the following members:

- 2.7.1 Three (3) board members, one of whom shall act as Chair of the Committee
- 2.7.2 Secretary-Treasurer
- 2.7.3 Director of Operations
- 2.7.4 Assistant Superintendent

A quorum shall be a majority of the members.

The Chair of the Committee shall preside. If absent the Chair of the Committee shall designate a member to act as Chair. Such appointee shall assume all powers and duties of the Chair when acting as such.

## 2.8 Meetings

2.8.1 The Committee shall meet at least four (4) times per year unless items referred to the committee by the board necessitate additional meetings.

# 3. Education Committee

## 3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Education Committee is to provide a forum for more in-depth discussion of issues related to student learning, student welfare and educational programs.

### 3.2 *Powers and Duties*

3.2.1 To review student learning and student welfare data, trends and issues particularly as they relate to the quality indicators in these sections of the superintendent's evaluation process.

3.2.2 To review progress relative to key results associated with the District Strategic Plan.

### 3.3 *Membership*

3.3.1 All trustees (Committee of the Whole)

### 3.4 *Meetings*

3.4.1 Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month

## 4. **Policy Committee**

### 4.1. *Purpose*

4.1.1 To prepare recommendations for additions/amendments/deletions to board Policy.

### 4.2 *Powers and Duties*

4.2.1 To review information from trustees/administration/stakeholders and develop policy positions as directed by the board.

4.2.2 To review board Policies on a schedule which would at minimum provide for the review of all policies at least once in a four (4) year board term of office and make recommendations to the board regarding amendments, changes and deletions.

### 4.3 *Membership*

4.3.1 Three (3) trustees

### 4.4 *Meetings*

4.4.1 Based on need; three (3) per year minimum.

## 5. **Community Engagement Committee**

5.1 Use responsive communication tools that provide public education stakeholders with information that is relevant to their interests

5.1.1 Develop and implement diverse communications strategies that focus on preferred communications of the community and respond directly to the expressed interests and concerns of public education stakeholders.

- 5.1.2 Evaluate the efficacy of communication efforts and apply learning about successes and challenges to future efforts to improve the communications work.
- 5.2 Re-structure its commitment to how it works with the community and makes decisions in collaboration with them
  - 5.2.1 Develop a Community Engagement and Planning (CEP) Task Force that can assist in the creation of a School District 71 Community Engagement Plan, with the understanding that the CEP Task Force will include Trustees, Staff, students and community stakeholders. A Terms of Reference for the CEP Task Force will be developed and include, at a minimum, the following:
    - 5.2.1.1 A purpose statement for the CEP Task Force that can include a commitment to developing and fostering a culture of community engagement excellence within School District 71;
    - 5.2.1.2 A description of the specific types of activities it is charged to complete and the specific deliverables it will produce;
    - 5.2.1.3 A set of guiding principles that can include a commitment to evidence based practice, community voice, transparency in decision making, openness, diversity of representation and trust;
    - 5.2.1.4 A description of the relationship between the Board of Trustee's legislated decision making duties, the role of SD staff in decision making and supporting decision making, and the advisory support that the CEP Task Force will provide in service of staff and the Board's deliberations. In other words, the line that separates Board decision making authority from staff, advisory support and community input must be clearly drawn;
    - 5.2.1.5 An initial term of service for the CEP Task Force of 12 months (with possibility of renewal) based on Board approval.
- 5.3 Based on the Community Engagement Forum Summary Report and under the leadership of the CEP Task Force, develop the School District 71 Community Engagement Plan. The Plan will include, at a minimum:
  - 5.3.1 An illustrated diagram that explains the scope of possible involvement of a community stakeholder in receiving information and participating in dialogue and decision making on priority issues affecting the local public education system.
  - 5.3.2 A description and rationale for a limited number of 3-5 priority public education issues around which community engagement and planning activities need to take place in the short and medium term.
  - 5.3.3 A process model that explains how community input can be developed into future education system directions. The process model should attend to

best practices in translating community voice into educational directions, which includes: option modelling that involves evidence review, cost benefit analysis, and feasibility assessments. Any educational direction that reaches the Board should go through such a process and be capped with a Board recommendation report from staff.

5.3.4 A detailed implementation strategy that outlines how community engagement and planning will happen in an ongoing way, during specified time frames, with required resources (to be determined) and in relation to a limited number of 3-5 priority public education issues.

5.4 Provide regular and relevant information to stakeholders on the work of developing the Community Engagement Plan and its implementation to show the commitment of the District Trustees and its Staff.

## 6. **Ad Hoc Committees**

Ad hoc committees may be established to assist the board on a specific project for a specific period of time. The terms of reference for each ad hoc committee shall be established by board motion at the time of the formation of the committee. Such ad hoc committees shall cease to exist when the purpose has been achieved. The chair of the board shall recommend membership on ad hoc committees while the board retains authority to approve such appointments.

## 7. **Resource Personnel**

The superintendent may appoint resource personnel to work with committees and shall determine the roles, responsibilities, and reporting requirements of the resource personnel.

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 85 *School Act*

### BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

In response to requests from external organizations or agencies, the board will give consideration to naming representatives to various external committees, agencies and organizations. Such representation is established at the discretion of the board to facilitate the exchange of information on matters of mutual concern and/or to discuss possible agreements between the district and other organizations.

The board will determine the terms of reference for each representative. The board shall be guided by the following principles when naming representatives to other organizations:

1. The board's decision-making role can be exercised only by the board as a whole, not by an individual trustee or committee;
2. The board's function is governance, rather than administration;
3. Responsibilities placed on trustees are to be closely related to the board's central role as per Policy 2.

The superintendent may appoint resource personnel to work with the representative and shall determine the roles, responsibilities and reporting requirements of resource personnel.

The following organizations/committees will have board representation as identified normally at the annual Inaugural Meeting or alternatively at a subsequent meeting of the board.

#### External Committees

##### 1. **British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Provincial Council**

###### 1.1 *Purpose of the Provincial Council*

- 1.1.1 Act as a forum for discussion of relevant, timely and emerging issues identified from individual Boards, BCSTA Board of Directors, Ministry of Education and other sources.
- 1.1.2 Discuss, and/or develop, policy issues for submission at the Annual General Meeting.
- 1.1.3 Establish interim policies of the Association between general meetings.
- 1.1.4 Address matters as outlined in BCSTA bylaws, including Association budget approval.
- 1.1.5 Act on action requests from BCSTA Board of Directors.

## 1.2 *Powers and Duties of the Board Representative*

- 1.2.1 Attend Provincial Council meetings.
- 1.2.2 Represent the board's positions and interests at the provincial level.
- 1.2.3 Communicate to the board the work of the Provincial Council.
- 1.2.4 Bring recommendations to the board as and when necessary.
- 1.2.5 Build positive relationships.

## 1.3 *Membership*

- 1.3.1 One (1) trustee; one (1) alternate.

## 1.4 *Meetings*

- 1.4.1 As called by Provincial Council. (Usually 3-4 per year, one (1) at the AGM)

## 2. **British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA)**

### 2.1 *Purpose of the BCPSEA*

- 2.1.1 Act as the accredited bargaining agent for the BCSTA's members.
- 2.1.2 Assist in carrying out any objectives and strategic directions established by the Public Sector Employers' Council.
- 2.1.3 Coordinate collective bargaining objectives, benefit administration, human resource practices and out-of-scope compensation matters amongst members.

### 2.2 *Powers and Duties of the Board Representative*

- 2.2.1 Attend the BCPSEA meetings as required.
- 2.2.2 Represent the board's positions and interests at BCPSEA meetings.
- 2.2.3 Communicate to the board the work of BCPSEA.
- 2.2.4 Bring recommendations to the board as and when necessary.
- 2.2.5 Build positive relationships.

### 2.3 *Membership*

- 2.3.1 One (1) trustee; one (1) alternate.

### 2.4 *Meetings*

- 2.4.1 As called by BCPSEA.

## 3. **BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch**

### 3.1 *Purpose of the BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch*

- 3.1.1 Receive reports from the BCSTA Board of Directors.
- 3.1.2 Discuss and/or develop policy issues for submission at the Annual General Meeting.

- 3.1.3 Act as a forum for discussion of Vancouver Island Branch issues.
- 3.1.4 To provide trustee learning and development.

### 3.2 *Powers and Duties of the Board Representatives*

- 3.2.1 Attend BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch Committee Meeting; Branch Chairs Committee Meeting, Indigenous Education Representatives Meeting, Resolutions Committee Meeting, and Professional Learning Committee Meeting.
- 3.2.2 Represent the board's positions and interests at BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch meetings.
- 3.2.3 Communicate to the board the work of the BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch.
- 3.2.4 Bring recommendations to the board as and when necessary.
- 3.2.5 Build positive working relationships with other boards.

### 3.3 *Membership*

- 3.3.1 Any trustees may attend the Branch Meeting.

### 3.4 *Meetings*

- 3.4.1 Four (4) meetings per year or as called by VISTA as scheduled.

## 4. **Other Local Representation**

### 4.1 *Appointments:*

- 4.1.1 From time to time the board is invited to appoint representative(s) to committees or other entities external to the school district. Currently these include:

- Indigenous Education Council
- Professional Development Committee
- Teacher Mentorship / Peer Support Committee
- District Calendar Committee
- Indigenous Parent Club (IPAC)
- Tribune Bay Outdoor Education Society
- CVRD Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission
- CVRD Integrated Regional Transportation Select Committee
- Comox Valley Social Planning Society

### 4.2 *Purpose:*

- 4.2.1 The purpose of sending representatives to represent the board on such external committees or entities is to strengthen communication and understanding with the external organization

4.3 *Powers and duties of the representative is to:*

- 4.3.1 Represent the board's positions and interests. If no board position has been determined the representative will refrain from expressing a personal opinion and will seek a board position.
- 4.3.2 Communicate to the board the work of the external entity and any opportunities which may exist for mutual benefit involving the board and the entity.
- 4.3.3 Build positive relations between the entity and the board corporate

4.4 *Representatives:*

- 4.4.1 Normally one (1) representative

4.5 *Meetings:*

- 4.5.1 As determined by the external committee or entity

- 4.6 The board shall review annually the efficacy of continued board representation on such committees or entities.

**5. School Liaison Trustee Role**

The chair shall after consultation with individual trustees recommend School Liaison assignments and these shall be ratified by the board.

School liaison responsibilities shall not:

- 5.1 Inhibit or circumvent administrative authority or responsibility
- 5.2 Include any decision-making authority

Parent Advisory Councils as per section 8 of the *School Act* may advise the board and the principal and staff of a school. At the invitation of the PAC the school trustee liaison may attend the PAC meetings. If the Parent Advisory Council wishes to advise the board corporate, that advice is to be sent to the board.

The role of liaison trustee is to provide visual support for school activities including but not limited to athletic competitions, fine arts performances and displays, school celebrations, and recognition events. The role allows trustees to become knowledgeable of public school events while keeping manageable the time demands should there not be some limiting of expectations for board or trustee attendance at such public events.

Legal Reference: Sections 8.4, 8.5, 22, 65, 74, 85 *School Act*  
Ministry of Education website

## Policy 10

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### POLICY MAKING AND REVIEW

Policy development is a key responsibility of the board. Policies constitute the will of the board in determining how the district will be operated and communicate the board's values, beliefs and expectations. Policies provide direction and guidelines for the action of the board, superintendent, staff, students, electors and other agencies. Policies also serve as sources of information and guidelines to all who may be interested in or connected with the operation of the district. Adoption of new board policies or revision of existing policies is solely the responsibility of the board.

The board shall be guided in its approach to policy making by ensuring adherence to the requirements necessary to provide public education and compliance with the *School Act* and provincial as well as federal legislation.

Board policies shall provide an appropriate balance between the responsibility of the board to develop the broad guidelines to guide the district and the opportunity for the superintendent to exercise professional judgment in the administration of the district.

The board may choose to utilize the Policy Committee in carrying out its policy role.

The board believes in the establishment and review of policy which reflects its values and perspectives.

The board shall adhere to the following stages in its approach to policy making:

#### 1. **Planning**

The board, in cooperation with the superintendent, shall assess the need for a policy, as a result of its own monitoring activities or on the suggestion of others, and identify the critical attributes of each policy to be developed.

#### 2. **Development**

The board may develop the policy itself or delegate the responsibility for its development to the superintendent.

#### 3. **Implementation**

The board is responsible for the implementation of policies governing its own processes. The board and superintendent share the responsibility for implementation of policies relating to the board / superintendent relationship. The superintendent is responsible for the implementation of the other policies.

#### 4. **Evaluation**

The board, in cooperation with the superintendent, shall evaluate each policy in a timely manner in order to determine if it is meeting its intended purpose. The board shall review

its policies following a schedule that results in all policies in the Board Policy Handbook being reviewed at least once in a board term of office.

### **Specifically**

1. Any trustee, employee, parent, student or other community member may make suggestions regarding the possible development of a policy or the need for policy revisions on any matter by presenting a proposal for a policy or revisions, in writing, to the superintendent. The proposal shall contain a brief statement of purpose or rationale.
2. The superintendent will inform the board of the request for policy development/revision. The board will determine the action to be taken including the option of referring the matter to the Policy Committee.
3. When appropriate, the superintendent shall seek legal advice on any policy matter.
4. Policy drafts shall be brought by the Policy Committee chair to the board for consideration and possible approval.
5. The board will determine whether further information or consultation is required.
6. If further consultation is required, comments and suggestions on the policy draft will be reviewed by the superintendent and the board.
7. Once comments have been considered and any information needs satisfied (if so determined), the policy will be recommended to the board for approval.
8. Only those policies which are adopted and recorded in the minutes constitute the official policies of the board.
9. In the absence of existing policy, the board may make decisions, by resolution, on matters affecting the administration, management and operation of the district. Such decisions carry the weight of policy until such time as specific written policy is developed.
10. If the board adopts a motion which has continuing applicability the board shall seek means to include the direction of such motion as part of an existing policy or to develop a free-standing policy to reflect the direction contained in the motion.
11. The board may request the superintendent to change an administrative procedure to a draft board policy and will in such an instance provide the rationale for same.
12. The superintendent shall develop administrative procedures as specified in Policy 11 – Board Delegation of Authority and may develop such other procedures as deemed necessary for the effective operation of the district.
13. The board may also delete a policy and subsequently delegate the superintendent authority over this area. The superintendent may choose to then develop an administrative procedure relative to this matter.
14. The superintendent must inform the board of any substantive changes to administrative procedures as an information item in a board agenda.

15. The superintendent shall arrange for all board policies and administrative procedures and subsequent revisions to be posted on the district's website, in a timely manner, for staff and public access.
16. The board shall review and revise its policies on a rotational basis which provides for all policies being reviewed at least once per term of office.

Legal Reference      Sections 65, 74, 85 *School Act*

### BOARD DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The *School Act* allows for the board to delegate certain of its responsibilities and powers to others.

The board authorizes the superintendent to do any act or thing or to exercise any power that the board may do, or is required to do, or may exercise, except those matters which, in accordance with provincial legislation, cannot be delegated. This delegation of authority to the superintendent specifically:

1. Includes any authority or responsibility set out in the *School Act* and regulations as well as authority or responsibility set out in other legislation or regulations;
2. Includes the ability to enact Administrative Procedures required to carry out this authority; and;
3. Includes the ability to sub-delegate this authority and responsibility as required.

Notwithstanding the above, the board reserves to itself the authority to make decisions on specific matters requiring board approval. This reserved authority of the board is set out in board policies, as amended from time to time.

Further, the board requires that any significant new provincial, regional or local initiatives must be initially brought to the board for discussion and determination of decision-making authority.

#### Specifically

1. The board expressly delegates to the superintendent, the authority to discipline, suspend or dismiss an employee, subject to the limitations of legislation, collective or contractual agreements and board policy. Any suspensions or dismissals shall be reported to the board as soon as practicable.
2. The superintendent is directed to develop an Administrative Procedure to fulfill board obligations created by any federal or provincial legislation.

Legal Reference: Sections 22, 65(2)c, 74, 85 *School Act*

# ROLE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

## Background

The Superintendent of Schools is the Chief Executive Officer of the district. The Superintendent reports directly to the Board and is accountable to the Board of Education for the conduct and operation of the District. All Board authority delegated to the staff of the District is delegated through the Superintendent.

## Specific Areas of Responsibility

### 1. Student Learning

- 1.1 Provides leadership in all matters relating to education in the District.
- 1.2 Implements directions established by the Minister.
- 1.3 Ensures that learning environments contribute to the development of skills and habits necessary for the world of work, post-secondary studies, life-long learning and positive citizenship.
- 1.4 Reports annually on student results achieved.

### 2. Student Well-Being

- 2.1 Ensures that students are provided with a safe and caring environment that encourages respectful and responsible behaviour.

### 3. Fiscal Responsibility

- 3.1 Ensures the fiscal management of the District is in accordance with the terms or conditions of any funding received by the board under the *School Act* or any other Act or regulation.
- 3.2 Ensures the District operates in a fiscally responsible manner, including adherence to recognized accounting procedures.
- 3.3 Prepares and presents the budget which reflects board priorities including strategic plan priorities.
- 3.4 Ensures the board has current and relevant financial information.

### 4. Personnel Management

- 4.1 Has overall authority and responsibility for all personnel-related matters, except the mandates for collective bargaining and those personnel matters precluded by legislation, collective agreements or Board policy.

## **5. Policy/Administrative Procedures**

- 5.1 Provides support to the board regarding the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of Board policies.
- 5.2 Develops and keeps current an Administrative Procedures Manual that is consistent with Board policy and provincial policies, regulations, and procedures.

## **6. Superintendent/Board Relations**

- 6.1 Respects and honours the board's role and responsibilities and facilitates the implementation of that role as defined in Board policy.
- 6.2 Provides the information and counsel which the board requires to perform its role.
- 6.3 Attends all Board meetings and makes recommendations on matters requiring board action by providing accurate information and reports as are needed to ensure the making of informed decisions.

## **7. Strategic Planning and Reporting**

- 7.1 Leads the development and implementation of the strategic planning process.
- 7.2 Involves the Board appropriately and collaboratively in the development of the Board's Strategic Plan (board identification of priorities and key results, and final board approval of the plan).
- 7.3 Reports at least annually on results achieved.

Legal Reference: Section 22, 85 *School Act*

Updated: December 8, 2020

## **MONITORING SUPERINTENDENT PERFORMANCE**

The purpose of the Annual Performance Review is to monitor the Superintendents performance relating to the Districts strategic priorities, organizational leadership, and Board support during the year and on the basis draw reasonable summative conclusions. In addition, the Board may assess the Superintendents performance related to the specific areas of responsibility as noted in Policy 12 and other criteria established jointly with and agreed to by the Board and the Superintendent.

The Board shall adhere to the following schedule and methods for the Superintendent Performance Review.

### **1. Schedule**

- 1.1 The performance of the Superintendent is a formative ongoing process that correlates to the Strategic Plan.
- 1.2 A formal review evaluation shall occur at least once during the term of the Board (or length of the contract)

### **2. Method**

- 2.1 The Superintendent shall provide the Board with a yearly report regarding the Districts progress on the Strategic Plan.
- 2.2 The Superintendent and the Board shall agree in writing on the Superintendents Review procedures and criteria based on Policy 12.
- 2.3 The Superintendents performance review process shall involve all Board members and the Superintendent, other individuals or stakeholders may be included in the performance review process as agreed to by the Board and the Superintendent.
- 2.4 Mutually agreed upon external facilitators may be used to conduct the performance review.
- 2.5 The purpose and methods of the performance review are intended to be growth orientated, promoting both ongoing learning and improved performance.
- 2.6 Notwithstanding the above schedule and methods, the Board and Superintendent shall continuously monitor the Superintendents performance and Board-Superintendent relations through private briefings and other methods as determined by the Board Chair and Superintendent.

Updated: December 8, 2020

## **SUPERINTENDENT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT GUIDE**

### **1. Student Learning**

*Role Expectations:*

RE 1.1 Provides leadership in all matters relating to education in the district.

RE 1.2 Implements directions established by the Minister.

RE 1.3 Ensures that learning environments contribute to the development of skills and habits necessary for the world of work, post-secondary studies, life-long learning and citizenship.

RE 1.4 Reports annually on student results achieved.

*Quality Indicators relative to Student Learning:*

QI 1.1 Annually conducts an analysis of student success and ensures school principals develop action plans to address concerns.

QI 1.2 Identifies trends and issues related to student achievement to inform the strategic planning process, including the implementation of innovative means to improve measurable student achievement.

QI 1.3 There is measurable improved student achievement over time.

### **2. Student well-being**

*Role Expectations:*

RE 2.1 Ensures that students are provided with a safe and caring environment that encourages respectful and responsible behaviour.

RE 2.2 Ensures the safety and welfare of students while participating in school programs or while being transported to or from school programs on transportation provided or approved by the district.

RE 2.3 Ensures the facilities safely accommodate district students.

*Quality Indicators relative to Student well-being:*

QI 2.1 Develops measurements and monitors progress relative to providing a safe and caring environment.

QI 2.2 Ensures the safety and welfare of students while being transported to or from school programs on transportation provided or approved by the district.

QI 2.3 Ensures the facilities safely accommodate district students.

### 3. **Fiscal Responsibility**

*Role Expectations:*

RE 3.1 Ensures the fiscal management of the district is in accordance with the terms or conditions of any funding received by the board under the *School Act* or any other Act.

RE 3.2 Ensures the district operates in a fiscally responsible manner, including adherence to recognized accounting procedures.

RE 3.3 Prepares and presents the budget which reflects board priorities.

RE 3.4 Ensures the board has current and relevant financial information.

*Quality Indicators relative to Fiscal Responsibility:*

QI 3.1 Ensures accepted (PSAB) accounting principles are being followed.

QI 3.2 Ensures all deficiencies identified in the previous audit report and management letter have been remediated to the satisfaction of the auditor.

QI 3.3 Ensures adequate internal financial controls exist and are being followed.

QI 3.4 Ensures all collective agreements and contracts are being administered and interpreted so staff and contracted personnel are being paid appropriately and appropriate deductions are being made.

QI 3.5 Ensures an internal audit process is developed and implemented in regard to school based funds and an annual report provided to the board.

QI 3.6 Provides the board with quarterly financial accountability reports.

QI 3.7 Ensures the board is informed immediately regarding pending litigation.

### 4. **Personnel Management**

*Role Expectations:*

RE 4.1 Has overall authority and responsibility for all personnel-related matters, except setting the mandates for collective bargaining and those personnel matters precluded by legislation, collective agreements or board policy.

*Quality Indicators relative to Personnel Management:*

QI 4.1 Develops and effectively implements quality recruitment, orientation, staff development, disciplinary, evaluation and supervisory processes.

QI 4.2 Models commitment to personal and professional growth.

QI 4.3 Provides for training of administrators and the development of leadership capacity within the district.

## 5. **Policy/Administrative Procedures**

### *Role Expectations:*

RE 5.1 Provides support to the board regarding the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of board policies.

RE 5.2 Develops and keeps current an Administrative Procedures Manual that is consistent with board policy and provincial policies, Regulations and procedures.

### *Quality Indicators relative to Policy/Administrative Procedures:*

QI 5.1 Appropriately involves individuals and groups in the administrative procedures development process.

QI 5.2 Demonstrates a knowledge of and respect for the role of the board in policy processes.

## 6. **Superintendent/Board Relations**

### *Role Expectations:*

RE 6.1 Respects and honours the board's role and responsibilities and facilitates the implementation of that role as defined in board policy.

RE 6.2 Provides the information and counsel which the board requires to perform its role.

RE 6.3 Attends all board meetings and makes recommendations on matters requiring board action by providing accurate information and reports as are needed to ensure the making of informed decisions.

### *Quality Indicators relative to Superintendent/Board Relations*

QI 6.1 Implements board decisions with integrity in a timely fashion.

QI 6.2 Interacts with the board in an open, honest, proactive and professional manner.

QI 6.3 Provides the board with balanced, sufficient, concise information and clear recommendations.

QI 6.4 Ensures board agendas are prepared and distributed to trustees in sufficient time to allow for appropriate trustee preparation for the meeting.

QI 6.5 Keeps the board informed on sensitive issues in a timely manner.

QI 6.6 Ensures high-quality management services are provided to the board.

## 7. **Strategic Planning and Reporting**

### *Role Expectations:*

RE 7.1 Leads the development and implementation of the Strategic planning process.

RE 7.2 Involves the board appropriately (board identification of priorities and key results, and final board approval of the plan in conjunction with the annual budget).

RE 7.3 Reports at least annually on results achieved.

### *Quality Indicators relative to Strategic Planning and Reporting:*

QI 7.1 Ensures key results identified by the board are achieved.

QI 7.2 Ensures facility project budgets and construction schedules are followed or timely variance reports are provided to the board.

Legal Reference: Section 22, 85 School Act

## **APPEALS BYLAW**

### **1. Preamble**

In the spirit of procedural fairness, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) has established processes for parents to express their questions or concerns to the appropriate authority. As described in Section 11 of the *School Act*, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) supports and recognizes the right of the student, parent or guardian to appeal an employee decision that significantly affects the education, health or safety of the student. The failure of an employee to make a decision shall be deemed a decision for the purpose of initiating an appeal under this bylaw.

Notwithstanding the above, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) expects that prior to appeal, appropriate consultative and problem-solving discussions have taken place in accordance with established policy or procedures. It is also an expectation that the appeal has commenced within a reasonable amount of time from the date of the decision, and that it is free from malicious or veracious intent.

### **2. Examples of Issues that May Significantly Affect the Education, Health or Safety of Students**

The following list is intended as a guide for parents/students/guardians and the board.

- 2.1 disciplinary suspension from school for a period in excess of ten (10) consecutive days;
- 2.2 disciplinary suspension that prohibits student opportunity to write government examinations or attend school commencement exercises;
- 2.3 placement or failure to place a student in a full-program alternative school setting;
- 2.4 full grade retention or promotion of a student;
- 2.5 refusal to provide an educational program for a student under sixteen (16) years of age;
- 2.6 suspension from school due to a health condition;
- 2.7 a substantive issue that affects the education, health or safety of the student.

### **3. Notice of Request for a Hearing**

- 3.1 The person making the appeal shall complete *the Notice of Appeal* form (attached). Upon request or need, the superintendent or designate will provide assistance to the applicant or cause such assistance to be available.

- 3.2 Upon receipt of a request, the chairperson of the board, after consultation with the vice-chair and/or the superintendent of schools when appropriate, will cause a meeting to be organized to hear the appeal in a timely manner.

#### 4. **Appeal Hearing**

- 4.1 The board shall call a special confidential meeting to hear any appeals and shall confine the deliberation to the decision being appealed. The applicant and the respondent (employee making the decision) may each have a support person present.

The board requires that the applicant and/or respondent provide, in writing, at least three (3) days before the meeting, the name and occupation of the support person who will be present and what role that person will play in the meeting. Any written documentation or other material to be provided at the hearing must be made available to the applicant and the respondent at least three (3) working days prior to the hearing.

- 4.2 The chairperson of the board shall begin the meeting by introducing all present, emphasizing the confidentiality of the meeting, reviewing the process to date on the issue, and explaining the process for the hearing. However, it is acknowledged that the board cannot require confidentiality of a member of the public appealing a decision.

The person making the appeal shall speak first, followed by the respondent. The respondent shall give the reasons for the decision, and may include contextual factors such as classroom, program, school or district, including impact on other children (although others shall not be named). The applicant and the respondent shall each have an opportunity to speak to what has been said by the other.

- 4.3 In most cases, the superintendent or designate shall be present to act as an advisor to the board. Should the decision being appealed be a decision made by the superintendent, the board shall appoint a member from the management staff indicating that, for the purposes of that meeting, they be the senior advisor to the board.

#### 5. **Determination of Appeal**

The board shall include, but not limit itself to, the following when making a decision:

- 5.1 Was the employee decision within the scope of his/her mandate?
- 5.2 Did the employee follow board policy in making the decision?
- 5.3 Did the employee follow school, site or program policies and/or procedures when making the decision?
- 5.4 Was there a review of the original decision with a reasonable attempt at resolution?
- 5.5 Did the employee give fair and reasonable consideration of the information available?

5.6 Was due consideration given for attempting to achieve a balance between the needs and rights of the individual student and the needs and rights of other students in the school and/or program?

5.7 Was there any new information or new perspectives arising from the hearing?

5.8 Is there any other information that, in the board's view, is relevant to the issue?

The board, through the senior staff advisor, shall provide a written determination to the applicant and the employee in a timely manner. The senior advisor shall advise the applicant that they have a right to appeal the board's decision through the Office of the Ombudsman.

Legal Reference: Section 11 *School Act*

**Policy 13 -Appendix**

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**NOTICE OF APPEAL—SCHOOL ACT APPEALS**  
**COMOX VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 71**

Pursuant to Section 11 of the *School Act* and Board Bylaw, the applicant (parent/student/guardian) is requested to complete this Notice of Appeal form.

NAME (Student) \_\_\_\_\_

NAME (Parent/Guardian) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Description of decision being appealed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date that the applicant was advised of decision \_\_\_\_\_

Name of employee who made the decision \_\_\_\_\_

Grounds for appeal and change(s) or remedy sought (attach additional pages if required)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Steps Taken to Date to Resolve the Issue:**

Step 1: Parent/student/guardian contact(s) with employee \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: Parent/student/guardian meeting with school administration \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: Parent/student/guardian meeting with district administration \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

Copy to: Superintendent  
Employee

NoticeofAppeal.0903

## Policy 14

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### PERMANENT SCHOOL CLOSURE

A school may be identified for potential closure when an analysis indicates that the closure is worth considering from a demographic, fiscal, or educational perspective. When a school will potentially be closed, the Board of Education will provide a minimum of 60-days for the consultation process relating to the specific schools proposed for closure.

#### Public Board Meeting

Any proposed closure of a school will first be raised at a regular open meeting of the board. If a school is identified for closure, the closure process shall be guided by a Consolidation Working Committee which shall be formed at least 60-days prior to a final decision on school closure. The superintendent of schools will form a committee that will develop timelines for consultation.

The superintendent will invite participation from:

1. the secretary treasurer (or designate);
2. trustees;
3. the principal of the school being considered for closure;
4. another school principal;
5. district staff members as appropriate;
6. two (2) representatives from the school staff;
7. three (3) members of the school PAC;
8. one (1) representative from each of the CDTA, CUPE, and DPAC;
9. one (1) representative from the Indigenous Educational Council;
10. one (1) representative from each affected municipality; and
11. others as appropriate.

The committee's terms of reference shall include:

1. An analysis of demographic trends, facility status, and other relevant data related to the school being considered for closure;
2. Analysis of information presented at public meetings and a summary of information gathered and presented through community and municipal input;
3. Analysis of educational and fiscal implications of the proposed closure/consolidation; and
4. The preparation of a final report to the superintendent that includes recommendations. The recommendations shall include items for the superintendent to consider if the closure proceeds as considered.

#### Public Consultation

Public consultation will be undertaken by the board prior to making a final decision on any proposed closure of a school. The board will take the following steps to ensure that an open and meaningful public consultation has taken place:

1. Make available, in writing, a full disclosure of all facts and information considered by the board with respect to any proposed school closure, including but not limited to: detailed reasons for the proposed school closure;
  - 1.1 which specific school(s) are being considered for closure;
  - 1.2 the proposed new catchment areas for all schools proposed to be affected;
  - 1.3 the number of students who would be affected, at the school(s) being considered for closure as well as surrounding school(s);
  - 1.4 the effect of proposed closures on board-provided student transportation;
  - 1.5 educational program/course implications for the affected students;
  - 1.6 the proposed effective date of the closure(s);
  - 1.7 financial considerations, and
  - 1.8 impact on the board's five (5) year capital plan.
2. Provide an adequate opportunity for affected persons to submit a written response to any proposed school closure as well as providing information and directions on how to submit a written response to the board. The information and directions shall advise potential correspondents that their written response may be referred to at subsequent public forums respecting the closure, unless the correspondent specifically states in their written response that the correspondent wishes his or her name and address to remain confidential.
3. Hold at least one (1) public meeting to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions, and provide a process for the community to outline their concerns and proposed options.

The public consultation process must include:

- 3.1 A fair consideration of the community's input and adequate opportunity for the community to respond to a board's proposal to close the school permanently;
- 3.2 Consideration of future enrolment growth in the district of persons of school age, persons of less than school age and adults; and
- 3.3 Consideration of possible alternative community use for all or part of the school.

### **Public Meeting**

The time and place of the public meeting shall be appropriately advertised to ensure adequate advance notification to affected persons in the community. Generally, this will mean a letter to students and parents of students currently attending the school, and a clearly visible notice in a local newspaper and notification on the district and school web page.

The board shall also specifically notify, in writing, any potentially affected local governments and First Nations of the time and place of the public meeting.

### **Meeting Format**

The meeting will be organized to have attendees seated at tables of ten to twelve (10-12) participants. Each table will have a facilitator to discuss and overview the following:

1. implications of the closure
2. implementation plans, including timing of the closure
3. options that the board considered as alternatives to closure;
4. possible future community growth in the area of the school; and
5. contents of written submissions presented to the board by members of the community.

At the conclusion of the group discussions facilitators will report back the information collected from the discussion group to all those in attendance. Information collected from the group discussions will form part of the meeting minutes.

The board shall keep minutes of the public meeting that include a record of options suggested or concerns expressed about the proposal.

Following the public meeting, the board shall give fair consideration to all public input prior to making its final decision with respect to any proposed school closures.

### **Final Decision**

At the conclusion of the consultation process and after receiving the reports from each of the working committees of the schools considered for closure, the superintendent will provide a report to the board on the consultation process and the schools considered for closure.

The report to the board will identify the issues to be considered and will include recommendation(s) on whether or not to proceed with the closures as proposed. The report shall also include items for the board to consider regardless of the final decision on closures.

The board will make its final decision regarding the proposed school closure at an advertised public board meeting following the consultation process and receipt of the superintendent's report.

Legal Reference: Sections 73, 168(2)(p), 85, *School Act*  
School Opening and Closure Order M320-02  
Disposal of Land or Improvement Order M233/07

### **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PERSONNEL**

The board believes strong leadership and administration at the district and school levels are essential to the effective and efficient operation of the school system.

#### **Specifically**

1. Any changes to the organizational structure shall be approved by the board prior to the commencement of recruitment and selection processes commence.

#### **Superintendent**

2. The board, in the case of the superintendent, or the superintendent, in all other instances, shall have sole responsibility for initiating the advertising process and shall make reasonable effort to ensure that all current district employees are made aware of staff vacancies.
3. The board has the sole authority to recruit and select an individual for the position of superintendent and anyone who is expected to act in the place of the superintendent for a period in excess of one hundred and eighty (180) days.
4. In order to protect the board from sudden loss of the superintendent's services, the superintendent shall ensure that staff are designated to perform the services of the superintendent in the case of a short-term or prolonged absence, and that the chair is advised of the delegation.

#### **Non-School Based Positions**

5. The following process shall be followed for the following senior district management positions Assistant superintendent and secretary treasurer positions:
  - 5.1 The superintendent is delegated full authority to recruit and select senior staff and district management positions within the limitations of legislation, budget allocations and collective agreements.
  - 5.2 The superintendent shall engage in a consultative process in order to assist in the development of an ideal candidate profile.
  - 5.3 These positions shall have a written role description and the person occupying each of the positions shall have a written contract of employment consistent with the board approved template contract.
  - 5.4 Compensation will be determined based on BCPSEA compensation guidelines.
  - 5.5 The superintendent shall invite trustees to sit on the interview panel for these positions. The authority to select the successful candidate, however is that of the superintendent alone.

6. The superintendent is delegated full authority to recruit and select staff for all other non-school based positions within the limitations of legislation, budget allocations, contracts and collective agreements.

### **Principal and Vice-Principal Positions**

7. At the discretion of the superintendent and within the constraints of this policy, principal or vice-principal vacancies shall be filled through either: Principal and Vice-Principal mobility, selection from the Vice-principal hiring pool; or through competition for a posted vacancy.
8. *Principal and Vice-Principal Mobility*
  - 8.1 The Board of Education believes that changes in Principal and Vice-Principal assignments can be positive for professional growth and the strengthening of system leadership.
  - 8.2 The superintendent is delegated authority for determining such changes in assignment.
  - 8.3 Consideration for transfer may be initiated at the request of either the principal or the superintendent. Normally, such consideration shall be given after the principal has held an appointment for a reasonable period of time, and there is value to be gained by a transfer.
  - 8.4 Once mobility transfers have been completed the superintendent shall inform the board of these new assignments.
9. *Vice Principal Hiring Pool*
  - 9.1 The district shall maintain a Vice-Principal. (District Eligible Administrator Pool (DEAP)).
  - 9.2 Internal applicants may remain in the pool for two (2) years. External applicants remain in the pool for one (1) year. After one (1) year, the external applicants are reviewed and their references checked. Positive references may allow external applicants to remain in the eligibility pool for a second year.
10. *Competition for a Posted Vacancy for Principal of Vice-Principal Positions*
  - 10.1 The superintendent is delegated full authority for all aspects of the selection processes for the positions of Principal and Vice-Principal except as otherwise provided for in this policy. This delegated authority includes but is not restricted to: establishing and carrying out a consultation process, recruitment, advertising, reviewing applications, short-listing, developing interview processes, communications with candidates, chairing the interview process including directing the questions to the candidates and facilitating the panel's review of short-listed candidates, determining the preferred candidate, making the appointment, and ensuring appropriate contractual arrangements.

## **All Other School-Based Positions**

11. The superintendent is delegated full authority to recruit, select, assign and reassign staff for all school-based positions, within the limitations of legislation, budget allocations, contracts and collective agreements.
12. The superintendent is delegated full authority to recruit and select staff for all other staff positions, within the limitations of legislation, budget allocations and collective agreements.
13. All offers of employment shall be conditional on the successful applicant providing a criminal records check acceptable to the superintendent or one provided through the Criminal Records Review Program (Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General).

Legal Reference: Sections 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 65, 85 *School Act*

## **INDEMNIFICATION BYLAW**

It is in the interest of a responsive and efficient public service that trustees, officers and employees be protected against a claim of damages arising out of the performance of their duties. None of these individuals shall be placed in a position of personal liability for the performance of responsibilities vested in them by the *School Act* or assigned to them by the board.

**By-Law:**

1. The board will indemnify a trustee, an officer or an employee of the board
  - 1.1 Against a claim for damages against the trustee, officer or employee arising out of performance of their duties; or
  - 1.2 Where an inquiry under Part 2 of the *Inquiry Act* or other proceeding involves the administration and conduct of the business of the School District and, in addition, the board may pay legal costs incurred in proceedings arising out of the claim, inquiry or other proceeding.
2. The board may, by affirmative vote of a majority of its members, pay:
  - 2.1 Any sum required to indemnify a trustee, an officer or an employee of the board where a prosecution arises out of the performance of their duties with the board; and
  - 2.2 Costs necessarily incurred;

But the board shall not pay a fine imposed on a trustee, an officer or an employee as a result of their conviction.
3. The board shall not seek indemnity against a trustee, an officer or an employee of the board in respect of any action by the trustee, officer or employee that results in a claim for damages against the board except
  - 3.1 Where the claim for damages arises out of the gross negligence of the trustee, officer or employee; or
  - 3.2 Where, in relation to the action that gave rise to a claim for damages against an officer or employee, the officer or employee willfully acted contrary to:
    - 3.2.1 The terms of their employment, or
    - 3.2.2 An order of a superior.

4. The board's obligation to indemnify a trustee, an officer or an employee in respect of matters occurring during their term of office or employment shall continue, notwithstanding that the term of office or employment, as the case may be, has ended.
5. Where the board decides to pay legal costs incurred in proceedings out of a claim, inquiry under Part II of the *Inquiry Act* or other proceedings, the board has the right to conduct the defense of the matter and, in its discretion, to compromise and/or settle the claim.
6. The board shall not indemnify a trustee, officer or employee against:
  - 6.1 Liability and legal fees incurred as a result of an action or other proceeding taken by the board against the trustee, officer or employee, or as a result of an action or proceeding taken by the trustee, officer or employee against the board;
  - 6.2 Liability to pay a fine, penalty or order imposed as a result of the conviction for an offence;
  - 6.3 Legal fees incurred as a result of a prosecution where the trustee, officer or employee is convicted of an offence or obtains a conditional discharge;
  - 6.4 Legal fees incurred in an appeal of any conviction, sentence, judgment or order, unless the board, by an affirmative vote of a majority of its members, so agrees;
  - 6.5 Liability and legal fees incurred by a trustee where the Court determines that the trustee knowingly contravened the *School Act*;
  - 6.6 Liability incurred by a trustee, officer or employee where the Court determined that the trustee, officer or employee knowingly permitted or authorized an expenditure not authorized by an enactment;
  - 6.7 Liability incurred by a trustee as a result of any restitution ordered pursuant to Section 62 of the *School Act*; and
  - 6.8 Those matters for which the board may seek indemnity from an employee pursuant to its authority under Section 95 of the *School Act*.
7. The board may enter into individual indemnity agreements with its officers and employees not inconsistent with provisions of the *School Act*.

Legal Reference: Section 95, *School Act*

### **SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY (SOGI)**

The Board of Education recognizes and values the diversity found within its school communities and believes that each individual contributes to the strength of the district's culture. The board recognizes that each member of the school and district community must share the responsibility for supporting all students and employees in addressing and facing challenges and that the district is responsible for providing an educational system that is safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming for all.

All members of the school district have the right to expect that its policies, procedures, and communications are inclusive and respectful, taking into consideration visible and invisible diversities including but not limited to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, religion, ability, culture and socioeconomic status.

The Board of Education will strive to promote safe environments, free from fear, harassment and discrimination by adhering to a code of conduct that is educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response; will foster school cultures that are responsive to the diverse needs of individuals and groups; will recognize the injustices of marginalization, advocate for social justice and promote human rights as defined in the B.C. Human Rights Code and Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and will participate in the ongoing development of practices that promote fair and equitable treatment for all, cultivating mutual respect, civility and sense of belonging.

The board will not permit, encourage, nor tolerate any behaviours contrary to these beliefs whether by commission or by failing to act to bring such behaviours to an end and by providing support and assistance to those who may be intended or unintended targets of such behaviours.

#### **Statement of Intent**

The Board of Education will promote a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, and pro-active strategies and guidelines to ensure that lesbian, gay, transgender, two spirit, bisexual, queer and questioning (2SLGBTQ+) students, employees and families are welcome, included, and affirmed in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity. This includes acknowledging individual preferences around privacy and individual ownership of process. This policy will ensure that all programs, activities and interactions are free from discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define appropriate language, behaviours and actions in order to create an environment free from discrimination and harassment;
- develop, promote and implement respectful, proactive strategies and guidelines to ensure that 2SLGBTQ+ members of the education community and their families are welcome in, and included in all aspects of education and school life and are treated with

respect and dignity; and to

- ensure that complaints about homophobia and transphobia are taken seriously and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through collaboration with the impacted person and in line with policy and procedures.

## **General Guidelines**

When considering aspects of this document, it is important to keep in mind that gender is fluid and not binary. It is important to create an environment in which individuals have the knowledge, freedom, safety and support to make the right choices for themselves at the right time for themselves.

The school district has an obligation to ensure that members of the school community who are 2SLGBTQ+, and members of diverse family structures are respected, included and safe in the school communities and related activities.

## **Safety**

1. Homophobic and transphobic comments, discrimination, and bullying are demeaning to all students, students' parents or guardians, and employees regardless of their actual and perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. These forms of harassment and discrimination are prohibited under the B.C. Human Rights Code.
2. Any language or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination, or harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or perceived gender identification will not be tolerated. Schools shall include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student codes of conduct.
3. All employees have an obligation to intervene in any interaction involving the use of homophobic or transphobic epithets and slurs, and behaviours regardless of the speaker's intentions, and to convey that such comments are against Board policy and will not be tolerated in the educational community.

## **Belief Statements**

School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) accepts the responsibility to create safe and caring environments and believes that:

1. the district is responsible for ensuring that school cultures are safe, welcoming, inclusive, and affirming for 2SLGBTQ+ people;
2. the role of educators in the district is critical in creating positive societal change to address the difficulties that 2SLGBTQ+ people often face;
3. 2SLGBTQ+ students and same-gender parented families have a right to be recognized and affirmed by school personnel and have equal access to services as do opposite-gender parented families;
4. 2SLGBTQ+ students, staff and same gender-parented families have the right to:
  - be free from harassment, discrimination and violence;
  - be treated fairly, equitably and with dignity;
  - self-identification and freedom of expression;
  - be included and to be represented and affirmed in a positive and respectful manner;
  - have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are impacted by harassment, discrimination, and violence; and
  - have their families and communities valued and affirmed.
5. a role of education is to prepare young people to work and live in open, pluralistic and democratic societies, free of discrimination or violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression;
6. equity through education will foster principles of inclusion and will support 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and families through eliminating homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism and cisgenderism as they operate in the school system and school culture; and that
7. the initiation of comprehensive anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia initiatives support equity for 2SLGBTQ+ students and educate our staff and community about homophobic and transphobic language and bullying.

## **Leadership**

As leaders of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), the Board of Education and senior management shall jointly ensure that all staff know it is their individual and collective responsibility to identify individual discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, as well as work to eliminate the systemic inequities and barriers to learning for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and demonstrate accountability for the removal of these inequities and barriers so that all students and employees are treated with fairness and respect.

All administrators, teachers, counsellors, and staff and student leaders will model respect for 2SLGBTQ+ employees, students and families and recognize that transition is not an event but a process that belongs to the individual that is transitioning. This recognition includes the

understanding that no person shall be “outed”. Communication about an individual’s identity, transition or sexual orientation shall only be personal initiative.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

All persons have the right to privacy. This includes the right to have one’s gender identity and sex assigned at birth, and sexual orientation private at school and worksites. Disclosing this information to students, parents, or other third parties violates privacy laws, such as the *Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) and the B.C. Human Rights Code. The district will ensure that all information relating to an individual’s sexual orientation and gender identity will be kept confidential in accordance with applicable district, municipal, provincial and federal policies and privacy laws, unless legally required to do so, or the student/parent or guardian has authorized such disclosure through the use of the district’s release of information form.

All persons have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when and how much private information to share and with whom. Those decisions need to be respected by school personnel. An individual shall determine the name and pronouns used to refer to themselves in all communications including when school personnel contact parents or guardians.

Schools must balance the parents’ or guardians’ need to be informed about their child’s school experiences with individual’s right to live freely in their self-identified gender and sexual orientation. This can be complicated when there is a responsibility to communicate with the parent or guardian about any situation at school directly related to an individual’s gender identity and sexual orientation. In general, the older the student, the more ownership they should have in this process. School personnel should err on the side of using the individual’s preferred name and pronoun to protect the individual’s privacy and human rights.

Situations arising at school may make it difficult or impossible for the school to keep an individual’s status from parents or guardians. Schools can, in consultation with the individual, work with trained support providers to formally reveal the individual’s gender identity to the parent or guardian in the relatively safe confines of the school. It is important to address all the potential consequences of this approach by consulting with and/or working with trained personnel familiar with such situations, while respecting that the process is owned by the individual. Ensure that support services can be accessed if it becomes evident that the individual is no longer safe to return home after the meeting. Privacy concerns are not a reason to prevent an individual from living as their self-identified gender. Issues of confidentiality vs open, respectful discussion must be handled on an individual basis. Individuals who choose to be open about their gender identity, will be addressed by their chosen names and pronouns. Denying this is a violation of their rights to free expression and equal protection under the law.

## **Self-Identification**

Every individual has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun of their choice. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the individual does not need to change their official records. When an individual has communicated their choices, it is the obligation of school personnel to use the chosen name and pronouns.

Schools are required, by law, to maintain a mandatory permanent record card which includes each students’ legal name and legal sex, yet have a great deal of latitude in how they handle student records in the day-to-day operations of the school. MyEd BC includes the ability for the

identification of “preferred name” and “preferred gender”, and in turn using the preferred name to populate any internally generated records such as:

- class;
- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) or photographer’s lists;
- attendance sheets;
- report cards;
- diplomas;
- sibling records;
- student identification; and
- parent notifications.

For situations where a student’s legal name must be used, such as provincial assessments, schools have utilized “hand coding” to help preserve a student’s desired identification.

### **Official Records**

Schools will maintain a mandatory permanent student record that includes a student’s legal name and legal sex. The school will change a student’s official record to reflect a change in legal name or sex upon receipt of documentation to which such change has been made by court order, or through amendment of provincial or federally issued identification. In situations where school staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a transgender student’s legal name or legal sex, such as for the purposes of standardized testing, school staff and administrators will adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information.

### **Washrooms, Locker and Change Rooms**

All individuals have the right to safe and private washroom and changing facilities. They have the right to access washrooms, locker rooms and changing facilities that correspond to their gender identity. The individual’s self-identification is the sole measure of the individual’s gender. Schools may maintain separate washrooms, locker rooms or changing facilities for males and females, provided that individuals can access them based on their gender identity. Schools will designate gender-neutral facilities designed for use by one person at a time, accessible to all individuals, and to incorporate such single-use facilities into new construction or renovation. Any individuals who is uncomfortable using a shared facility while attending an off-site school-sponsored activity will be provided with a safe and private alternative. Individuals will not be required to use facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity or personal needs.

### **Physical Education Classes, Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities**

All students have the right to participate in physical education classes, curricular and extra-curricular sports/activities in a manner that respects and embraces their gender identity. Student’s will be given the option to decide which activities they feel more comfortable doing. A request may come directly from the student or from a parent or guardian. It is the school administrator’s responsibility to make the requested arrangements for these students to participate in school and extra-curricular activities and physical education. All requests/meetings/ decisions must be documented and maintained in a confidential file.

### **Other Gender-Based Activities, Rules and Practices**

School personnel are required to evaluate all gender-based procedures, routines, activities, rules, and ceremonies to ensure inclusive language and purpose. Language used should be as gender neutral as possible in all cases. Newly written guidelines must be communicated to all staff, parents and students. Individuals have the right to expect that all policies, procedures, programs, and communications are appropriate, competent and respectful of gender diversity. Students will be permitted to participate in any activities consistent with their gender identity.

### **Billeting and Overnight Field Trips**

Plans for billeting for sports teams and/or overnight school-based activities must provide accommodation for each student in a room where they will feel safe and accepted. The student can decide where they would feel most comfortable if they are staying in shared accommodations with other students and/or families. The school administrator or teacher in charge of the event will make any needed adjustments to support the student. When staying with a billet family discuss with the student or their parent or guardian whether the student requires the billet family to be informed of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Wherever possible, in a billet situation, a member of staff should be billeted along with the student to further ensure their feelings of safety.

### **Media and Community Communication**

When the school district is communicating to the media or community about issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity, the school or district will designate a single spokesperson as the key contact person. All other district and school staff will direct community members and the media to the designated spokesperson. Protecting the privacy of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals is the top priority. All medical information is kept strictly confidential. Any violation of confidentiality of this information contravenes this administrative procedure and the privacy law *Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA).

### **Student Counselling and Support**

School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) is committed to maintaining a safe learning and working environment which actively provides counselling and support to individuals who self-identify on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. School Counsellors and Youth and Family Support Workers are often the first point of contact for students seeking emotional support and will be specifically trained in culturally safe responses to 2SLGBTQ+ issues. School administrators have the primary responsibility for ensuring that all school staff, Parent Advisory Committees (PAC) and students are familiar with and understand the content of the Inclusion Policy and these procedures. The Board of Education is responsible for ensuring that employees who represent the district in other areas are equally as informed. Students can report incidents of harassment, bullying, intimidation and discrimination through the ERASE Bullying Website. Information regarding the website is available through the school administration. The district encourages and will facilitate in the formation of Gay-Straight Alliance and Gender-Sexuality Alliance clubs (GSAs) where students or staff have come forward requesting this opportunity. Schools are encouraged to appoint a minimum of two (2) members of staff to be safe contacts for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. School administrators will inform students and other staff about the location and availability of these contact person.

### **Staff Development and Education**

Education is the primary purpose of the district. Educational programs will include curricular topics and learning resources that promote the inclusion of all members of our community

regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition, staff will have resources and training available to help teach and promote the safe, caring and inclusive values of the district. Schools will conduct annual staff training for all staff members on their responsibilities under applicable laws, policies and administrative procedures. This will include teachers, educational assistants, administrators, counsellors and youth and family workers, and other staff as deemed necessary. Information regarding this administrative procedure shall be incorporated into information sessions for new school employees. All staff share the collective responsibility of creating safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and their families.

Educators, Administrators, and school support staff will be expected to:

- be familiar with and know where to access the SOGI policy and prevention procedures;
- have a general understanding of definitions regarding sexual orientation and gender identity;
- develop appropriate communication strategies to interact with 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and their families;
- fully understand the concepts of protection of privacy for individuals and their families;
- be aware of strategies and procedures for intervening with issues, such as bullying, harassment and intimidation and/or discrimination, and have access to appropriate trained personnel;
- model and teach inclusive practices that honour and promote human rights;
- create inclusive and safe environments for 2SLGBTQ+ people and their allies.

Employees have an important role to play in teaching and modelling respect for gender diversity. It is expected that teachers will create classrooms and administrators will create schools where students can see a commitment to creating a safe, caring and discrimination free environment. Students need to see that adults are striving to promote an understanding of gender diversity beyond the binary of only two genders.

- addressing the class in non-gender ways (using inclusive language);
- seating and lining up students in non-gender groupings;
- creating mixed gender groups/teams;
- displaying signs, posters, safe place stickers, and books that depict a range of gender presentations;
- celebrating national and international days and events that raise awareness about gender identity;
- teaching students how to be allies for each other;

- avoiding making assumptions during health and career education instruction regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

The board will establish a joint committee which includes both adult and student representatives from the 2SLGBTQ+ community to act in an advisory capacity in the implementation of staff development, in-service, and professional development.

The advisory committee will consider the following recommendations/beliefs.

The goals of ongoing staff development will be to support 2SLGBTQ+ people and families in the school district and to promote anti-homophobia and anti-cisheterosexism, and anti-transphobia initiatives.

- trustees, management and staff must model respect and affirmation of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and families;
- in-service workshops and training on 2SLGBTQ+ issues will be provided for the benefit of trustees, management, and staff annually;
- trustees, management, and staff have the responsibility for addressing of homophobia, transphobia and cisheterosexism in the working and learning environment;
- teachers must be supported when they include positive images and accurate information about history and culture which reflects the accomplishments and contributions of 2SLGBTQ+ people;
- trustees, management and staff must facilitate safer school environments for people of all gender identities and expression and sexual orientations.
  - acknowledging that an acceptance of diversity is the starting point of respect;
  - treating everyone with respect;
  - using language that affirms all sexuality orientations and gender identities and expressions;
  - not using disparaging remarks or language that demeans 2SLGBTQ+ identities and families;
  - challenging staff, students and parents who behave in prejudicial ways towards 2SLGBTQ+ people;
  - encouraging teachers to sponsor and support 2SLGBTQ+ positive initiatives such as GSA's or Diversity Clubs;
  - supporting the right of 2SLGBTQ+ students to counselling that is supportive, affirming and free from efforts on the part of counsellors to try to change their sexual orientation and/or identity through the use of or the referral to aversion, reparative, or conversion therapies.

## **Employment Equity**

1. The board believes in equitable treatment for all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, or political beliefs. The letter and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *B.C. Human Rights Acts* and the Board's *Collective Agreements* shall be carefully observed, enforced, and supported, so that all members of the educational school community may work together in an atmosphere of respect and acceptance of individual differences.
2. The board will ensure the confidentiality of employees who are 2SLGBTQ+ and will give them the support they require to do their work in a safe and respectful environment.

## **School Community Involvement**

The board is committed to ongoing, constructive, and open dialogue with 2SLGBTQ+ people and others who self-identify on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The board will support community partnerships that would enhance the board's commitment to 2SLGBTQ+ students, staff, teachers, and parents.

The board will encourage parent advisory councils to acknowledge and support the diversity of our school community. The board will acknowledge through the communication to students, staff and the community that 2SLGBTQ+ parents and family members need to be positively recognized and included as such.

## **Appropriate Intervention / Responding to Incident**

All members of the SD #71 community have the right to expect a respectful and culturally safe environment free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. In 2007, the Ministry of Education mandated that school districts establish procedures that align with the *Ministerial Order M2276/07*. Each school must, in consultation with staff, parents and students establish their own Code of Conduct based on the ministerial order and guidelines. Appropriate interventions are included in the Code of Conduct administrative procedures. School district personnel may also refer to the SD #71 *Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy 3-8* as a guide in making intervention decisions.

## **Complaint Process**

In the event that an incident occurs at a school site, refer the complaint, in writing, to the school administrator.

If a complaint is against the administrator, refer in writing to the Director of Instruction, Health and Safety.

A thorough investigation will be conducted.

The complaint process shall be communicated to all schools, partner groups, and contracted services and district administration is responsible to ensure that employees and contract providers are aware of the process.

## **Appeal Process**

The Board of Education recognizes and respects the fact that students and/or parents or guardians may disagree with decisions made by employers. The *School Act* of British Columbia gives parents or guardians and students (with parental consent) the right to express concerns or appeal certain decisions. The right of appeal applies to decisions that significantly affect the health, education or welfare of students. Information regarding the board's appeal procedure and the formal appeal bylaw can be accessed on the District's website. (Management Relationship 2-5 Parent/Guardian/ Student Request for Review of Employee Decision). Prior to an appeal, it is expected that school administration, students and parents or guardians will try to resolve concerns at the school level.

Employees shall contact their respective unions for support and advice regarding appeals.

Legal Reference: Section 65, *School Act*

## **RESOURCES AND DEFINITIONS**

### **SOGI 1 2 3**

SOGI 1 2 3 shares proven SOGI-inclusive tools and resources in the areas of policy and procedures, inclusive environments and curriculum resources: [www.sogieducation.org](http://www.sogieducation.org)

### **BC Teachers Federation**

The BCTF offers a variety of free workshops to teachers that aim to develop skills to interrupt, address, and challenge homophobia and transphobia within our classrooms and school communities.

<https://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=17988>

### **Education Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC)**

ERAC provides a range of services including evaluation, licensing and acquisition of print, software, and digital learning resources. ERAC offers a curated catalogue of SOGI resources (see LGBTQ collection).

<http://www.bcerac.ca/index.aspx>

### **Out in Schools**

Out in Schools presentations and Learning Hub provide youth with opportunities not only to learn, but to do. The presentations offer a chance to build participation in and creation of Queer Straight Alliances across the province. The Rise Against Homophobia Video Contest offers youth the chance to make media as a vehicle not only for personal expression, but to shape more inclusive school communities.

<http://outinschools.com/about/>

### **QMUNITY – BC’s Queer Resource Centre**

QMUNITY is a non-profit organization based in Vancouver, B.C. that works to improve queer and trans lives. They provide a safer space for LGBTQ+/2S people and their allies to fully self-express while feeling welcome and included.

<http://qmunity.ca/>

### **Egale Canada Human Rights Trust**

Founded in 1995, Egale Canada Human Rights Trust is Canada’s only national charity promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) human rights through research, education and community engagement.

<https://egale.ca/>

### **MyGSA**

MyGSA.ca is Canada’s website for safer and inclusive schools for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) community.

<http://mygsa.ca>

## **Trans Care BC**

The Trans Care BC program aims to enhance to coordination of trans health services and supports across the province, bringing gender-affirming care closer to home wherever possible. <http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-service/trans-care-bc>

## **Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**

The leading national US-based education organization focused on ensuring safe and affirming schools for LGBTQ students: <http://www.glsen.org/>

## **Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**

PFLAG Canada is a national charitable organization, founded by parents who wished to help themselves and their family members understand and accept their non-heterosexual children. <http://pflagcanada.ca/>

## **Pride Education Network**

The Pride Education Network of teachers, administrators, support staff, youth and parents strive to make the B.C. school system more welcoming and equitable for LGBTQ students and staff, and queer families: <http://pridenet.ca/>

## **Definitions**

### **Bisexual:**

People who have a bisexual orientation can experience sexual, emotional, and affectional attraction to both their own sex and the opposite sex. It also refers to an individual's sense of personal and social identify based on those attractions and the behaviours expressing them. It is one (1) of the three (3) main classifications of sexual orientation, along with a heterosexual and a homosexual orientation.

### **Discrimination:**

The subordination of groups or individuals resulting from a distinction, preference or exclusion based on the grounds of race, religion, colour, ethnicity, place of origin, language, age, disability, socio-economic status, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sex, or any other difference. It includes harassment, any negative or adverse conduct, comment, gesture or contact, and systemic barriers based on the above grounds. This conduct is harmful and can create a working or learning environment that is known, or reasonably should be known, to be offensive.

### **Educational Community:**

Includes all those who work, learn, or attend any School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) schools, alternative educational settings and facilities, worksites, or any district facility, and includes ancillary sites such as school buses, district meeting settings, etc.

### **Gay:**

A person who is emotionally/romantically and physically attracted to persons of the same sex. Gay usually refers to males, but it is also used to include females. Gay can be used interchangeably with homosexual. Gay is most often the term preferred by the LGBTQ communities when referring to homosexual males.

**Gender Identity:**

Characteristics linked to an individual's intrinsic sense of self as a man or as a woman, which may not be the same identity as one's biological sex.

**Homophobia:**

The fear, and/or hatred, and/or repulsion of homosexuality and gender variance in oneself or in others, often exhibited by self-hatred, prejudice, discrimination, bullying or acts of violence. Homophobia is typically directed towards those who are openly LGBTQ or are perceived as such through gender cues that are not in accordance with societal norms about masculinity and femininity.

**Gender Expansive:**

Refers to a person who does not confirm to society's expectations of their gender role or gender expression. It is a broad term that includes boys who behave, dress and interact in feminine ways; girls who behave, dress and interact in masculine ways, in addition to trans students.

**Gender Expression:**

Refers to a way a person expresses one's gender, through dress, grooming habits, choice of name and pronoun, mannerism, activities, etc.

**Heterosexism:**

The assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior. Heterosexism can exist on a personal, interpersonal, institutional or cultural level.

**Intersex:**

Individuals who are born as "hermaphrodites", now an outdated term. Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. Though intersex is referred to as an inborn condition, intersex anatomy doesn't always show up at birth. Sometimes a person isn't found to have intersex anatomy until they reach the age of puberty, or finds themselves an infertile adult, or dies of old age and is autopsied. Some people live and die with intersex anatomy without anyone (including themselves) every knowing. A significant issue is the practice of some parents and physicians decided which sex is desired and then making a decision in favour of "normalizing" surgery at or near birth.

**Lesbian:**

A female who is emotionally/romantically and physically attracted to other females. Lesbian is usually the term preferred by the LGBTQ communities when referring to homosexual females.

**LGBTTTTIQQ or LGBT, LGBTQ, LBTTQ, LBTTQQ – and other variations:**

Acronym used to refer inclusively to a wide group of individuals and incorporates lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer, or questioning persons. For ease of reference in this policy the acronym LGBTQ has been adopted, but it is intended to be widely inclusive.

**Queer:**

A term used derisively to humiliate and demean LBGTQ individuals and groups. It is generally not viewed as an appropriate term for use outside, or in a manner directed towards the LGBTQ community because of the potential of its use in a contemptuous manner or with such intent, despite the fact that some students may identify themselves as "queer" in a positive way.

**Questioning:**

Adults and youth who are not personally certain about their own sexual identity or orientation and may be exploring, publicly or privately, their feelings in this area.

**Sexual Orientation:**

The emotional/romantic and physical attraction felt by an individual towards members of the same sex, the other sex or either sex. Actual sexuality is a private affair; however, expressions of sexuality (such as holding hands with one's romantic partner and putting a picture of her or him on one's desk) are public displays of sexual orientation. The public realm overwhelmingly privileges straight couples but lesbian or gay ones are often the target of stares, verbal violence, and sometimes physical violence.

**Sexual Orientation Identities:**

Lesbian, Gay, Straight, Bisexual and Questioning are ways that people identify themselves insofar as their romantic partnerships and family diversities are concerned.

**Transgender:**

A person whose gender identity (feeling of being either boy or man, girl or woman) does not match their physical/anatomical sex (male or female) and the gender roles assigned by mainstream society. Some describe it as being born into the wrong body. Increasingly, many transgender people refer to themselves as "trans."

**Transsexual:**

An individual who presents himself/herself and lives in the gender "opposite" to his/her genetic/physical gender at birth. A transsexual is someone who feels psychologically like the other sex and has somehow been trapped in the wrong body. Transsexuals may be heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual in their sexual orientation. Some transsexuals may undergo operations and hormone therapy in order to make their body fit what they feel is their true gender. These individuals are sometimes known as female-to-male, FTM, transmen or male-to-female, MTF, transwomen.

**Two-Spirit:**

This is a term that is used by some indigenous people to describe themselves in a way that reflects their cultural construct of sex/gender/sexuality. Many of the languages of indigenous nations of North America include specific terms for gender and sexual diversity; some indigenous people may use both the general term Two-Spirit and the culturally specific term from their own language to describe themselves.

## Policy 18

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### **ACCUMULATED OPERATING SURPLUS AND INTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS**

The Board of Education is responsible for ensuring the district is protected financially from extraordinary circumstances which would negatively impact school district operations and the education of students. To discharge this responsibility, the board will maintain an accumulated operating surplus which shall be used to mitigate any negative impact on students.

#### **Specifically**

1. In order to respond effectively to unanticipated cost pressures, the board shall endeavor to maintain a reserve fund of approximately 2% of the total operating budget of that year.
2. The board may vary from this budgeted reserve of 2% in order to address the following circumstances:
  - 2.1 The elimination of any deficit arising at the end of a fiscal year of operations;
  - 2.2 The incurring of new cost pressures in a fiscal year that were not known at the time of budget development;
  - 2.3 The payment of severances (wages and benefits) upon termination of employment;
  - 2.4 The settlement of any legal action that is not covered by insurance;
  - 2.5 Initial one (1) time cost outlays for new education programs;
  - 2.6 Coverage for disaster recovery expenditures;
  - 2.7 Extraordinary utilities cost pressures;
  - 2.8 Replacement of equipment deemed by the superintendent essential to the continuation of educational programming in schools or district facilities;
  - 2.9 To assist in balancing future years' budgets without reducing services.
3. The board directs that any funds restricted for a particular purpose will be expended for that purpose, and that operating funds will only be restricted when there is a clear requirement to do so. All transfers to and from internally restricted funds must be authorized by a specific board motion.
4. Any such transfers shall be considered by the board as part of the board's annual budgeting process. The board will not restrict funds with the intent of creating additional operating reserves beyond the 2% contemplated in this policy.

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 85.2, 110, *School Act*

## Policy 19

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### INDIGENOUS RECOGNITION AND INDIGENOUS VOICE

#### Land Recognition

The board directs that the following statement be read at the commencement of each board meeting:

***“The Board of Education acknowledges that we are on the traditional territories of the K’omoks First Nation. We would like to thank them for the privilege of living on their land and the gift of working with their children.”***

#### Indigenous Education Council

The Board of Education, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) recognizes that it operates on the traditional territory of the K’omoks First Nation.

Students of Indigenous ancestry must be provided with the opportunity to have an education that meets individual and community needs and includes their culture, heritage, language and self-government as Indigenous people.

The Indigenous community recognizes the importance of a shared responsibility for education between representatives of the Indigenous community, the Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), and the Ministry of Education.

The board recognizes the importance and right of people of Indigenous ancestry to participate in decisions affecting the educational programs of Indigenous children.

To support and acknowledge the importance of that shared responsibility, the school district will maintain an Indigenous Education Council (IEC).

In recognition of the shared responsibility to improve the quality of education of Indigenous students in School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), it is agreed that the terms and goals of the Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement (IEEA) will enhance the basis of Indigenous education, programs and services of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley).

The IEC will have Terms of Reference governing its meetings and affairs, including representation and processes for electing representatives. These terms shall be shared annually with the Board of Education.

The Indigenous Education Council may advise the board on any matter pertaining to the education of Indigenous students.

Legal Reference: Section 65, *School Act*

### COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Board of Education is committed to balancing its fiduciary role with enhancing community involvement in the school district. As such, the board is committed to the principle of public involvement in education and endorses open, two-way communication with its internal and external partners.

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of effectively communicating and engaging with our community for the purpose of sharing information, receiving feedback and discussing important issues facing the school district.

As part of the process, the district will provide information about practices, programs, policies and provide opportunities to contribute opinions and perspectives on decisions pending or made by the board regarding the operation of the schools and school district.

*The Framework for Communications and Community Engagement* outlines procedures for operationalizing communications and community engagement in School District No. 71 (Comox Valley).

#### Communications and Community Engagement Framework Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes of adopting the framework include:

1. Improve public education through effective communication and engagement.
2. Improve internal and external communications between the district, its schools, staff, parents, students and community partners.
3. Identify and increase opportunities for engaging the community in a manner that is meaningful, timely and appropriate.
4. Identify and increase opportunities to share district information and to gain community insights about our district.
5. Determine how best to engage with the various audiences.
6. Identify and increase opportunities for developing relationships with the media and using this medium effectively.
7. Use social media to deliver key aspects of the district's message and to receive information from the community.

#### Purpose of the Framework

The purpose of the *Framework* is to present a clear and concise direction for communicating with the school district's community. The plan primarily addresses two (2) types of school district audiences: internal (students, teachers, staff, unions, administration and school board) and

external (parents, businesses, civic groups, and other members of the district’s community) and considers the processes to be used to reach these audiences.

Through the development and implementation of this communications framework, the school district will:

1. *Inform*: Provide timely information about board and administrative decisions made, and activities and events across the division.
2. *Consult*: Increase the involvement of staff and community through consultative practices to obtain feedback on issues or decisions.
3. *Collaborate*: Partner with staff and or community in arriving at a solution.
4. *Foster* the exchange of information between the school district and the communities it serves.

### Guiding Principles

The Board of Education believes that:

1. Meaningful decision-making and consultation processes are respectful of and use different ways to engage with our diverse educational partners.
2. District decision-making information are to be accessible, understandable, relevant and responsive to the needs of the community.
3. District-wide community engagement are to be authentic and meaningful.
4. Staff briefings to the board will include communication ideas and or recommendations (where appropriate).
5. The board will, as part of its deliberation process, consider if, when or how they will communicate or engage with the educational partners.

### Engagement and Communications Continuum

<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
Provide internal and or external public with information.	Obtain public feedback on a future decision coming to the board and or planning for the board.	Work directly with members of the public (internal and or external) throughout the entire process that culminates with a board decision.	Work with the public from the inception of a project to the final decision by the board.	Places final decision-making in the hands of the public.
e.g. newsletters, web-pages, blogs	e.g. public meetings, focus groups, surveys	e.g. advisory groups, public forums, public hearings	e.g. Workshops, design charrettes	e.g. Plebiscite, working committee

## **Identifying the Appropriate Engagement along the Continuum**

1. Moving from left to right in the framework, the communication processes becomes increasingly participative and the engagement level of the public in the process increases.
2. As policy and operational issues arise, the board will give consideration to the most appropriate level of engagement and the related strategies to employ.
3. Briefings to the board shall include a recommendation communications plan to most effectively engage the public based on a balance between time and importance of gaining public feedback on the topic.
4. Data and or other information collected through the engagement process shall be shared by placing it on the district webpage.
5. The data will be analyzed by staff and will be shared with the board as part of the decision-making process.
6. The board's eventual decision will be made public through the public-school board meeting process.

## **Framework for Regular Engagement Activities**

The Board of Education will:

1. Hold regular meetings of the board in an open manner before assembled public and press who shall have the benefit of a publicized schedule of meetings. In order to protect the legitimate interests of individuals and the community, "in camera" or closed meetings in private session shall be reserved to discuss matters as defined in legislation and board policy.
2. Hold regular Education Committee Meetings of the board periodically in various locations in the district.
3. Hold public forums in the district on educational issues as the need arises.
4. Provide the public with an opportunity to address questions to the board at each regular meeting.
5. Welcome delegations of students, parents, teachers, and others at regular board meetings.
6. Post agendas of regular meetings to the school district webpage and send, where appropriate, agendas to the associations representing the board's employees, to parent organizations in the district, and to groups and individuals requesting such agendas.
7. Publicize the deliberation and decisions of board meetings by distributing, via the district webpage an approved report of meetings.
8. Develop and maintain a regular community relations and information program which informs the community of the district's activities.

9. Establish a regular means of assessing the publics', parents', and students' needs and concerns regarding the district.

Legal Reference: Section 65, *School Act*

## Policy 21

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### **COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

The Board of Education endorses and supports the concept of community education and supports the development of community schools in appropriate areas of the school district.

Community education is an educational process which serves all age groups in the community. Furthermore, community education utilizes the total resources of the community to provide programs and services for all members of the citizenry. Community schools extend availability of programs and services beyond the traditional school boundaries, where appropriate.

Goals of community schools include the following:

1. use of schools as lifelong learning centres,
2. promote equitable and accessible educational opportunities for children, youth and adults,
3. use school, district and community resources to enrich services to children, youth and adults,
4. improve community relations and community development,
5. strengthen inter-agency cooperation and coordination of supports, and
6. recognize and respond to identified community needs.

The board shall approve schools as designated community schools. When considering proposals for approval as a designated community school, the board shall give consideration to factors including: existing community amenities, alignment to board priorities, consideration of board finances and resources, and input from the community.

Legal Reference: Section 65, *School Act*

## Policy 22

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### PROVISION OF MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS TO STUDENTS

The Board of Education is committed to providing menstrual products to students who may require them.

The Board will:

1. ensure menstrual products are made available to students of all gender identities or expressions in a manner that protects student privacy;
2. provide for barrier free, easily accessible menstrual products at no cost to student;
3. make menstrual products available in school washrooms;
4. consider students feedback with respect to the provision of menstrual products

Legal Reference: Sections 85(2)(a), 88(1), and 168(2)(t) *School Act*

Adopted: November 26, 2019

### **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION OF STUDENTS**

The Administrative Procedures for the physical restraint and seclusion of students is aligned with the BC Ministry of Education Provincial Guidelines for Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings. June 2015.

The Comox Valley Board of Education believes that access to an effective educational program is a basic right of each student. The board further considers positive educational/behavioural interventions, mental health supports and least restrictive approaches to the provision of students supports to be best practice. Respect for human rights, maintaining student dignity and the safety of all involved is paramount. The board believes that schools should be safe and caring places in which educational programs are carried out in positive and supportive learning environments. Every effort should be made to structure learning environments and to provide learning supports that make physical restraint and seclusion unnecessary. The overarching goal of learning environment design is the creative use of space to facilitate and support positive student learning experiences, rather than punitive disciplinary ones. The board acknowledges that employees use a variety of educative, preventative and restorative interventions to respond to a range of disruptive student behaviours that compromise student safety. In exceptional circumstances when student behaviour presents an imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others, including school personnel and where less restrictive interventions have proven to be ineffective in ending the danger or serious physical harm it may be necessary, as a last resort, for staff to use reasonable physical restraint or seclusion.

The decision to use reasonable physical restraint is guided by the professional judgement of staff. Staff will have the full support of the board in their efforts to maintain a safe learning environment to the extent that their actions comply with relevant legislation and district policy and procedures governing the physical restraint and seclusion of students.

The Comox Valley School Board does not support any form of physical restraint or seclusion as an on-going intervention. Any intervention that involves physical restraint or seclusion may be used only in cases of extreme emergency where they physical actions of the student threaten to cause harm to self or others.

#### Guiding Principles

1. Behavioural interventions for students must promote the rights of all students to be treated with dignity, honour and each student's right to feel safe.
2. Behavioural interventions for all students emphasize prevention and positive behaviour supports. Every effort must be made to employ preventative actions that preclude the need for the use of physical restraint or seclusion.
3. Positive emotional and behavioural interventions and mental health supports are provided for all students who need them in a safe and least restrictive environments.

4. Effective implementation of school-side programs that support positive behaviour, such as Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS), are linked to greater academic achievement among students, and to significantly fewer disciplinary problems, increased constructive instructional time, and to increased perception of safer teaching and learning environments (pg.2 Provincial Guidelines – *Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings*.)
5. There is a continuum of interventions in the management of disruptive behaviour. Behavioural interventions address the underlying cause and purpose of potentially harmful behaviour.
6. For students whose pattern of behaviour impedes their learning or the learning of others, a functional behaviour assessment is recommended to inform the development of a behavioural intervention plan. These plans incorporate positive interventions and include instruction in appropriate behaviour and strategies that will help students to learn to regulate and de-escalate their behaviour. Opportunities for parents/guardians and where appropriate, students to be consulted in the development of these plans must be offered.
7. Physical restraint or seclusion is only used in exceptional circumstances where the behaviour of a student poses imminent danger or serious physical harm to self or others and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending danger or serious physical harm. Physical restraint or seclusion is discontinued once imminent danger or serious physical harm to self/and or others has dissipated.
8. It is expected that all staff working in situations that involves physical restraint or seclusion is trained in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (CPI).
9. Students exhibiting behaviour that is compromising safety of self and/or students should be supported by appropriate documentation support (i.e. IEP and/or Behaviour Plan and/or Safety Plan and/or specialist consultation).
10. Parents/guardians of students who require physical restraint or seclusion will be informed as soon as possible when these interventions are used.
11. Recurring practice of physical restraint or seclusion is not common practice in any student's education program. If a student struggles to show safe behaviour and interrupts the learning of other consistently, educational programming may need to be reviewed with parents, outside agency and team. This review may include and is not exclusive to: an abbreviated school day, an alternate setting, alternate programming, home schooling, Distributed Learning until the student's behaviours have stabilized.

Adopted: November 26, 2019

## EQUITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

1. The Board of Education is committed to inclusive, equitable treatment and opportunities for all individuals throughout the system. The letter and spirit of the Canadian Humans Rights Act, B.C. Human Rights Code and the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the B.C. Multiculturalism Act, shall be observed, supported, and enforced, so that all members of the School District community may work together in an atmosphere of respect where differences are honoured.

The Board of Education acknowledges that Discrimination:

- Exists and takes many forms, including but not limited to racism, indigenized racism, sexism, misogyny, and homophobia.
  - Can be direct or indirect, overt or subtle (microaggressions), intentional or unintentional and exists at institutional and systemic levels.
  - Impacts people in different ways, each person's reaction to discrimination is unique, and some members of our school district community face multiple forms of discrimination.
  - Can have long term negative consequences on a person's sense of self and /or a person's ability to fully actualize. (*The legacy of residential schools*).
  - Has no one-size-fits-all solution. Different types of discrimination will require different approaches, strategies, and procedures to combat; and
  - Constitutes an infringement of a person's equality rights and acts as a barrier to full participation in the school district community and society at large.
2. The Board of Education is committed to creating an inclusive environment through the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the support of educational and employment equity for all who learn and work in Comox Valley Schools. It also recognizes and celebrates the diversity of the community it serves and believes that each individual contributes to the richness of the School District culture.
  3. The Board of Education also acknowledges that all members of the School District community, staff, students, parents, caregivers, and other stakeholders, share the responsibility for creating a responsive, compassionate, inclusive environment

which honours and respects everyone. The Board is committed to supporting all members in their efforts to create an environment where all individuals feel safe, cared for and a sense of belonging. The Board of Education expects each member of the District community to participate in the ongoing development of practices that promote fair and equitable treatment for everyone, cultivating mutual respect, civility and a sense of belonging, as we eliminate all forms of discrimination and address the effects of historic, organizational, systemic, and attitudinal discrimination of all forms.

4. The Board of Education is committed to:
  - a. Equity and inclusivity in all contexts, activities and places.
  - b. Supporting the education of how to act directly or as a bystander against all forms of discrimination.
  - c. Developing cross-cultural connections to create understanding, show respect for, and to honour racial, ethnic and cultural identity, religion and individual abilities.
  - d. Ensuring that school codes of conduct make explicit references to the prohibited grounds of discrimination as outlined in the B.C. Human Rights Code.
  - e. Supporting employment equity through the provision of effective process to recruit, retain and develop all staff acknowledging gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, disabilities, ancestry, national and ethno-cultural organization and religion.
  - f. Support educational equity through quality programs that celebrate diversity and welcome all learners recognizing gender identity, race, colour, disabilities, ancestry, national and ethno-cultural organization and religion.
  - g. Create an educational and workplace environment that promotes equality and welcomes and values diversity.

Adopted: January 25, 2022

# CHILD CARE

### Background

Bill 8, the Education Statutes Amendment Act, came into force on March 5, 2020. This amendment of the School Act by the provincial government enacts new provisions related to childcare facilities located on board of education property. It includes a prescriptive order from the Minister of Education with respect to the contents required in board policy to govern the establishment of childcare facilities. Order M326, the Child Care Order, further defines the role of boards of education with respect to the provision of childcare programs.

The Board of Education of School District 71 (Comox Valley) recognizes the value and importance of available childcare and quality early learning programs in the community. Effective early childhood programming (0-8 years) is an important service a society can offer to ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their potential. It is critically important that these opportunities are offered at the earliest stages of a child's life when formative lifelong skills and abilities are being developed. Investment in quality programming during early childhood reaps significant long-term benefits for children, their families, and the community. If child care programs are operated by a licensee other than the Board, the Board will require the licensee to agree to comply with this Policy and Administrative Procedure 553 – Child Care and Before & After School Programs.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance with respect to how the Board will promote the use of board property for the provision of childcare programs between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on business days by either the Board or third-party licensees.

The use of board property by licensed childcare providers must not disrupt or otherwise interfere with the provision of educational activities including early learning programs and extracurricular school activities.

### Definitions

In this policy, the terms “board property”, “business day”, “childcare program”, “educational activities” and “licensee” have meanings given to those terms in the School Act.

“Direct and indirect costs” include:

- a. Utilities;
- b. Maintenance and repair;
- c. Insurance;
- d. A reasonable allowance for the cost of custodial services;
- e. A reasonable allowance for time school administrators and other staff spending on matters relating to the use of board property by licensed childcare providers;
- f. Capital replacement costs.

### Guiding Principles

The district will, on an ongoing basis, assess community need for childcare programs on board property, through a process of engagement with employee groups, parents and guardians, Indigenous community representatives, Indigenous rightsholders, Indigenous service providers, and existing childcare operators. The process for engagement will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and shall be conducted in a manner acceptable to the Board.

Prior to entering into or renewing a contract with a licensee other than the Board to provide childcare programming on board property, the Board will consider:

- a) Whether it is preferable for the Board to become a licensee and operate the childcare program directly;
- b) The availability of school district staff to provide before and after school care;
- c) Whether, with respect to a licensee seeking renewal or extension of a contract, the licensee has performed its obligations under this policy and its contract with the Board, with specific regard to performance in respect of providing an inclusive childcare program and one that promotes Indigenous reconciliation in childcare.

If the Board decides to operate a childcare program, the Board will ensure that it is operated in a manner that:

- a) Fosters Indigenous reconciliation in childcare. In particular, the childcare program will be operated consistently with the following principles of the BC *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*: (i) Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including in the area of education; and (ii) “Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which will be appropriately reflected in education”; and
- b) Is inclusive and consistent with the principles of non-discrimination set out in the BC *Human Rights Code*.
- c) Is inclusive and consistent with the Early Childhood Educators of BC Code of Ethics.

Childcare programs, if operated by the Board, will be operated for a fee no greater than the direct costs the Board incurs in providing the childcare program.

In selecting licensees other than the Board to operate a childcare program, district staff will give special consideration to the candidates’ proposals to: (a) provide inclusive childcare; and (b) foster principles of Indigenous reconciliation in childcare.

Fees for the use of board property by licensees to third-party operated programs will not exceed the direct and indirect costs the Board incurs in making board property available for the childcare program, as provided for in the School Act and set by the Secretary-Treasurer.

Any contract with a licensee other than the Board, to provide a childcare program on board property must be in writing and subject to review annually. The contract, which will be in the form of a Licensee to Occupy Agreement must contain:

- a) A description of the direct and indirect costs for which the licensee is responsible;
- b) An agreement by the licensee to comply with this Policy and its Administrative Procedures, and all other applicable policies of the Board;
- c) A provision describing how the agreement can be terminated by the Board and the licensee;
- d) An allocation of responsibility to ensure adequate insurance is in place to protect the interests of the district;
- e) A statement that the agreement can only be amended in writing, signed by the Board and the licensee;
- f) A requirement for the licensee to maintain appropriate standards of performance;
- g) A requirement that the licensee must at all times maintain the required license to operate a childcare facility;
- h) A requirement that the licensee must ensure that children have at all times immediate access to an employee who:
  - i. Holds a valid first aid and CPR certificate, provided on completion of a course that meets the requirements of Schedule C,
  - ii. Is knowledgeable respecting each child’s medical condition, if any, and

- iii. Is capable of effectively communicating with emergency personnel.
- i) A requirement that the licensee must have first aid kits that are readily accessible to all employees, including while care is provided off the childcare facility premises.
- j) An understanding that the licensee will work in cooperation with the Early Learning staff on professional development and in-service, as well as engage in information sharing opportunities that support children's successful participation in the program and at school as they arise.

Where the Board decides to change the use of board property that is being used for providing a childcare program, the Board must, without delay, provide the Minister with written notification of the decision in a form and with information specified by the Ministry.



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

# Questions & Answers:



## Gender Identity in Schools

Canada 

*Our mission is to promote and protect the health of Canadians through leadership, partnership, innovation and action in public health.*

**Public Health Agency of Canada**

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# Questions & Answers:



## Gender Identity in Schools

# Table of Contents

<b>Preface and Acknowledgements</b> .....	i
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>What do we know about gender identity?</b> .....	1
Are all gender variant individuals gay, lesbian or bisexual? .....	2
Have gender variant individuals always existed? .....	2
Do people choose to be gender variant? .....	3
<b>There are many terms to discuss gender identities.</b>	
<b>What are the proper terms and how do I know when to use them?</b> .....	3
<b>There are no gender variant youth in my school. Why address these issues?</b> ....	3
<b>What are the health, safety, and educational concerns of gender variant students in our schools today?</b> .....	4
Harassment and Verbal Abuse .....	4
Mental Health .....	4
Suicide .....	5
Hormone Therapy .....	5
Other Health Risks .....	6
<b>What do I do if a student discloses a gender variant identity to me?</b> .....	6
<b>What can the schools do to support gender variant youth?</b> .....	7
Provide a Safe Environment .....	7
Develop School-wide Policies .....	7
Professional Development Opportunities .....	8
Raise Awareness .....	9
Challenge Gender Norms .....	9
<b>What can the schools do to support the parents/caregivers of gender variant youth?</b> .....	9
<b>How can the schools build resiliency among gender variant youth?</b> .....	10
<b>Concluding Remarks</b> .....	11
<b>Additional Resources</b> .....	12
<b>Endnotes</b> .....	19

## Preface

First published in 1994 and revised in 2003 and 2008, the Public Health Agency of Canada's *Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education (Guidelines)* were developed to assist professionals working in the area of health promotion and sexual health education in programming which supports positive sexual health outcomes. Feedback from a national evaluation of the *Guidelines* indicated the need for companion documents to provide more detailed information, evidence and resources on specific issues. In response, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) identified a 'question and answer' format as an appropriate way to provide information to educators and other professionals working with school-aged populations. The Questions and Answers styled documents are intended to cover a range of topics reflecting current issues in sexual health education with school-aged populations, are evidence-based and use inclusive language as reflected in the *Guidelines*.

This document, *Questions & Answers: Gender Identity in Schools*, is intended to address the most commonly asked questions regarding the gender identity of youth in school settings. The goal of this resource is to assist educators, curriculum and program planners, school administrators, policy-makers and health professionals in the creation of supportive and healthy school environments for youth struggling with issues of gender identity.

## Acknowledgements

The Public Health Agency of Canada would like to acknowledge and thank the many contributors and reviewers who participated in the creation of *Questions & Answers: Gender Identity in Schools*. The development of this document was made possible through the valuable input provided by experts working in the field of sexual health education and promotion across Canada, including the members of the Sexual Health Working Group of the Joint Consortium for School Health. A complete list of the external reviewers can be found online at:

[www.publichealth.gc.ca/sti](http://www.publichealth.gc.ca/sti).

In addition, the Public Health Agency of Canada would like to acknowledge the staff of the Sexual Health and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Section, Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control, for their contribution to the development of this document.

## Introduction

The term ‘gender’ was first used in the 1950s to differentiate the set of feelings and behaviours that identify a person as ‘male’ or ‘female’, from their anatomical ‘sex’ which is determined by their chromosomes and genitals.<sup>1</sup> ‘Gender’ is now understood as the roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that is attributed to males and females by society.<sup>2</sup> Gender is one of the most basic elements of human identity. Gender is so fundamental to our identity that, without being aware of it, many aspects of human life are structured by and reveal our gender. Throughout the life course<sup>3</sup>, everyone subconsciously acts out gender and reflects gender in various ways, including their dress, mannerisms, and recreational activities. These actions and reflections form components of our ‘gender identity’ or our sense of being ‘male’, ‘female’ or something other than these traditional categories.<sup>4</sup>

Most people mistakenly assume that our gender identity is defined by our anatomical sex. In the majority of cases, people’s gender identity is consistent with their anatomical sex. However, some people feel and express a gender identity that is not the same as their biological sex. These inconsistencies can cause a great deal of distress and confusion to individuals, their families and their friends. Gender identity issues can also cause a great deal of anxiety among professionals working with these individuals, who may not feel informed and competent enough on this topic to provide support.

This document provides answers to some of the most common questions that educators, parents/caregivers, school administrators, and health professionals may have about gender identity in the Canadian school context. The answers provided in this resource are based on up-to-date evidence and research.

These Questions and Answers on gender identity are designed to support the implementation of the *Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education*<sup>5</sup> (*Guidelines*). The *Guidelines* are premised on the belief that comprehensive sexual health education should reflect the diverse needs and realities of all people, and should be provided in age-appropriate, culturally-sensitive, and respectful manner, inclusive of gender diversity. This Questions and Answers resource is targeted at helping educators (in and out of school settings), curriculum and program planners, school administrators, policy-makers and health professionals implement the *Guidelines* to ensure that:

- 1 sexual health educational programming is inclusive of the pressing health, safety, and educational needs and challenges of gender variant youth;
- 2 the experiences of gender variant youth are included in all facets of broadly-based and inclusive sexual health education; and
- 3 educators, administrators, and school board personnel are provided with a more thorough understanding of the goals and objectives of broadly-based and inclusive sexual health education.

### GENDER VARIANT:

A term to refer to individuals whose expressions of gender do not conform to the dominant gender norms of masculinity and femininity.

### GENDER IDENTITY:

A person’s internal sense or feeling of being male or female, which may or may not be the same as one’s biological sex.

## What do we know about gender identity?

The term ‘gender identity’ refers to an individual’s sense of self as ‘male’, ‘female’ or an identity between or outside these categories.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of people have a gender identity that matches their anatomical sex and/or that matches societal expectations for males and females. However, there are individuals whose gender identity does not match their anatomical sex or that conflicts with societal expectations for males and females. There are a variety of identities and expressions that exist on a continuum between male and female including, cross-dressers (e.g., drag queens, drag kings), gender-benders and gender variant, gender non-conforming, and two-spirit individuals. For consistency in this document, we use the term ‘gender variant’ to refer to all of the above gender identities between male and female, on this continuum.

**Are all gender variant individuals gay, lesbian or bisexual?**

There is a common misunderstanding that gender variant individuals are gay, lesbian or bisexual, however the majority of gender variant individuals do not identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual.<sup>7</sup> This is because gay, lesbian, and bisexual identities refer to an individual’s ‘sexual orientation’ which is different than an individual’s gender identity. Sexual orientation refers to an individual’s emotional and sexual attraction which may be to members of the same or the opposite sex, or both. Though it is possible that some gender variant individuals will also struggle with their sexual orientation, we do not specifically address this issue in this document, focusing instead only

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION:**

A person’s affection and sexual attraction to other persons.

on gender identity. A separate document entitled *Questions & Answers: Sexual Orientation in Schools* explores these issues more fully.<sup>8</sup>

**GAY:**

A person who is physically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same sex. The word gay can refer to both males and females, but is commonly used to identify males only.

**LESBIAN:**

A female who is attracted physically and emotionally to other females.

**BISEXUAL:**

A person who is attracted physically and emotionally to both males and females.

**Have gender variant individuals always existed?**

Though the language of gender identity is contemporary, people who have challenged the stereotypical categories of gender have existed for much of human history. Gender variant individuals have existed in many cultures including indigenous<sup>9</sup>, Southeast Asian<sup>10</sup>,

**TWO-SPIRIT:**

Some Aboriginal people identify themselves as two-spirit rather than as bisexual, gay, lesbian or transgender. Historically, in many Aboriginal cultures, two-spirit persons were respected leaders and medicine people. Before colonization, two-spirit persons were often accorded special status based upon their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives.

South American<sup>11</sup>, Caribbean<sup>12</sup>, European<sup>13</sup>, and African tribes<sup>14</sup>. The most well-documented of these gender variant identities exists in indigenous cultures. “Two-spirit” people of the First Nations are Aboriginal peoples who are ‘other gendered’ in their abilities to cross traditional gender categories and to express both genders. These individuals are recognized as ‘third gender,’ are honoured and respected as healers, and turned to for guidance and strength.<sup>15</sup>

### Do people choose to be gender variant?

Research on the development of gender variant identities suggests that it is linked to a number of factors including neurological<sup>16</sup>, hormonal<sup>17</sup>, biological<sup>18</sup>, social and relational influences<sup>19</sup> and is not a passing phase.<sup>20</sup> Instead, the development of gender identity, including a gender variant identity, occurs in stages across the lifespan.<sup>21</sup> Studies on gender variant individuals suggest that the awareness and experience of being 'different' begins as a child, and that there is a long history of internal tension between the individual's anatomical sex and their sense of their gender that extends into adolescence and, in some cases, beyond.<sup>22</sup>

### There are many terms to discuss gender identities. What are the proper terms and how do I know when to use them?

Language to describe gender variant identities is continually changing and keeping track can be challenging. Gender variant youth self-identify in many ways and have constructed a language about their identities and experiences that is critical for other individuals to understand and respect. For example, gender variant youth may self-identify as one of many terms, including trans or genderqueer. Many of these terms have had

#### **GENDERQUEER:**

Used to describe individuals who perceive their gender to be neither that of a male or female but outside of the gender binary.

controversial histories including their use in derogatory ways, making it unclear how to address and respond to gender variant youth in a sensitive manner. If you are not sure of how an individual

self-identifies, don't make assumptions. Let the youth tell you how they self-identify. Admitting you are unaware is much more respectful than assuming and using the wrong language.

In addition to adopting the language the youth themselves prefer to use, there are other important things to consider. Be cognizant of the language being used in the classroom and during school events. For example, texts and lessons that use the 'she/he' binary ignore the range of gender identities discussed in this document. By using more inclusive language, such as 'they' instead of 'she' or 'he', not only will transgender youth feel more supported but it will also help to educate the entire school community about gender diversity.

Ensure that you use the appropriate language in regards to the pronouns and names of all transitioning students. Refer to a gender variant youth using the name and pronouns they have chosen to fit their gender identity instead of by their birth name which can make them vulnerable to harassment, ridicule and violence from fellow students.<sup>23</sup>

### There are no gender variant youth in my school. Why address these issues?

Gender variant students are attending schools in Canada, whether or not they are visible to other students, staff or administrators. There are several reasons why gender variant students may not be visible within the school community. First, most gender variant youth are invisible out of fear for their safety.<sup>24</sup> Individuals whose behaviours do not conform to the stereotypical societal expectations of male and female genders are vulnerable to discrimination, verbal abuse, bullying, and physical violence.<sup>25</sup> Second, while some gender variant individuals' goal is to 'transition', a process where their external appearance is altered to cross from one gender to the opposite<sup>26</sup>, there are a variety of other gender variant individuals that do not embody such drastic changes. The remainder adopt gender variant identities at various points along the continuum. For example, some may choose to alter only their dress. Finally, making the assumption that there are no gender variant youth in schools creates a barrier for gender

variant youth to disclose their identities or for recognizing students who may be struggling with this issue.

While many gender variant students remain invisible for the reasons cited above, there have been increasing numbers of students openly identifying as 'transgender' and/or openly struggling with their gender identity in the past decade.<sup>27</sup> Research studies on the proportion of transgender individuals in a population have found numbers as low as 2% and as high as 10%.<sup>28</sup> Given this prevalence in the population, it is likely that educators, school administrators, and health professionals have or will encounter at least one gender variant youth at some point in their professional career.<sup>29</sup> Addressing gender identity issues in the school benefits the entire school community by providing safe and optimal learning environments for all students, and by increasing the ability of the entire school community to tolerate difference and to respect everyone's unique experiences.<sup>30</sup> Identifying gender roles and expectations and how they play out in a variety of settings, including the school setting (even without students disclosing a gender variant identity), allows for the healthy development of all students through the creation of safe spaces, prevention of violence, and avoidance of mental health issues, such as depression and suicide, that result when these are lacking in the schools.<sup>31</sup>

## What are the health, safety, and educational concerns of gender variant students in our schools today?

### Harassment and Verbal Abuse

Gender variant individuals, by definition, challenge traditional gender roles. Youth who are targeted by their peers for not assuming the conventional gender roles may be harassed and bullied at a young age. By stepping outside of social expectations, these individuals are

vulnerable to verbal abuse<sup>32</sup>, physical abuse<sup>33</sup> and even sexual violence<sup>34</sup> at higher rates than their gender-conforming peers.<sup>35</sup> Studies suggest that in the school setting, as many as 96% of gender variant youth are verbally harassed and as many as 83% physically harassed.<sup>36</sup> As a result, as many as three-quarters of gender variant youth report not feeling safe in school and three out of four report dropping out.<sup>37</sup>

### Mental Health

In 1980 the American Psychiatric Association listed "gender identity disorder" (GID) in their Diagnostic Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV) and since then some people in the mental health profession have viewed 'gender variant' as a mental illness. Some individuals feel that including GID has unnecessarily labelled individuals who express gender variance as having a 'disease' or mental defect and advocate for its removal.<sup>38</sup> Others feel that the removal of GID from the DSM IV would not be beneficial since a diagnosis of GID is often required in order for gender variant individuals to start medical and surgical treatment for gender transition.<sup>39</sup> In addition, a diagnosis of GID provides a basis for the provision of supportive counselling to

#### SEX REASSIGNMENT SURGERY:

This is sometimes referred to as either sex change or gender reassignment surgery and is a surgical procedure to change the genitals and secondary sex characteristics from one gender to another.

reduce mental distress from gender identity. This tension illustrates the range of perspectives which are evoked by the discussion of gender identities.

It is important to highlight that

gender variant youth face the **same** general risk factors for depression and suicide as other youth. However, due to gender variant youths' experience of discrimination, stigmatization, harassment, verbal abuse and rejection, the effects of low self-esteem and depression may be severe.<sup>40</sup> While not all gender variant in-

dividuals will experience low self-esteem and depression when compared to their gender-conforming peers<sup>41</sup>, there is a strong link

**INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA:**

A diminished sense of personal self-worth or esteem felt by an individual as a result of the experienced or presumed homophobia of others.

between mental health issues and the alienation of not fitting in, especially in the school setting where students can be very critical of others who

are different. When confronted with a negative social environment, some gender variant youth experience confusion<sup>42</sup>, low-self esteem<sup>43</sup>, depression<sup>44</sup> and behavioural problems<sup>45</sup>. Furthermore, gender variant youth often lack accurate information, support networks, and role models about emotional and mental health and physical well-being.<sup>46</sup> Without the presence of resources or support, gender variant youth may be more vulnerable to internalizing their negative experiences, producing feelings of shame<sup>47</sup>, anxiety<sup>48</sup>, self-hatred<sup>49</sup> and often self-harm<sup>50</sup>. Compounding the lack of support for gender variant youth is the fact that they may be hesitant to seek help. There can be a sense of deep-rooted shame at the individual level for not conforming to the gender norms and gender variant youth may remain silent and try to act 'normal'. Youth may also not seek support for fear of a negative reaction from their parents/caregivers, teachers, peers and health professionals.

**Suicide**

In some circumstances, the increased abuse and emotional turmoil faced by gender variant youth can lead to desperate outcomes. It is estimated that more than one-third of all teen suicide attempts and actual suicides are made by lesbian, gay, bisexual and gender variant youth. Suicide attempts among gender variant youth are higher than they are for lesbian, gay, and bisexual

youth<sup>51</sup>, with some reports indicating that approximately one third of gender variant youth have attempted suicide.<sup>52</sup> Interpersonal violence and a lack of support from family and peers have been cited as reasons for increased rates of suicide attempts in gender variant individuals.<sup>53</sup>

**Hormone Therapy**

While the changes associated with puberty can be unsettling for all youth, the physical expression of biological sex attributes can be even more distressing for gender variant youth. The development of secondary sex characteristics that they feel do not correspond with their gender can have harmful mental and emotional effects.<sup>54</sup> Careful consideration must be given to adolescents who wish to undergo hormone therapy to transition from one sex to another as hormone therapies may cause irreversible effects on the body. Furthermore, health care professionals must be aware that not all youth who express a desire to use hormones to transition to their self-identified gender will still feel this way once they reach adulthood. Research has shown that 80 to 90%

**TRANSITION:**

Refers to the process of changing from one's birth sex to one's self-perceived gender. This process may involve dressing in the manner of the self-perceived gender, changing one's name to reflect the self-perceived gender, and undergoing hormone therapy and/or sex reassignment surgery to change one's secondary sex characteristics to reflect the self-perceived gender.

of pre-pubertal youth diagnosed with GID no longer experienced GID into adolescence.<sup>55</sup> However, delaying the start of hormone treatment past puberty has been linked to depression, suicide attempts, anorexia and social phobias.<sup>56</sup> The changes in their body may be so distressing that some youth who do not receive hormone therapy from a health professional may turn to the streets to get unregulated hormones.

**TRANSSEXUAL:**

A person who experiences intense personal and emotional discomfort with their assigned birth gender and may undergo treatment (e.g. hormones and/or surgery) to transition genders.

Without the guidance from a physician, youth may find it difficult to regulate the appropriate hormonal balance for transitioning sexes.

The improper use of hormones can lead to serious health problems, impacts pubertal growth and puts youth at risk for HIV and hepatitis C infection due to contaminated needles<sup>57</sup>.

**Other Health Risks**

Gender variant youth may also be at an increased risk for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. A sense of hopelessness and suicidal tendencies, has been linked to high risk sexual behaviour, making gender variant youth particularly vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.<sup>58</sup> In one study of ethnic minority gender variant youth, African American males transitioning to a female identity were eight times more likely to report being HIV positive than other ethnic minorities. In the same study, sexual assault and unprotected anal intercourse was reported among participants and up to 59% of youth also reported sex in exchange for money, shelter and/or drugs. Gender variant youth may run away for various reasons, including escaping a negative home environment,<sup>59</sup> and end up on the streets where they engage in sex work to survive and become at risk for STIs, including HIV.<sup>60</sup>

**What do I do if a student discloses a gender variant identity to me?**

If a student discloses to you their gender variant identity, it is important to support the student's self-definition and to ensure that they know they are valued.<sup>61</sup> Listen to what the student has to say about how they are feeling and what their gender identity means to them and ask them what they would like you to do (if anything). It is important to not attempt to 'fix' the gender variant youth by attempting to convince them to abandon their gender variant identity. This is not effective and actually leads to low self-esteem and mental health issues such as depression, self-harm and suicide.<sup>62</sup>

Current research indicates that gender variant individuals consciously select people to disclose to who they trust and who they believe will be supportive and sympathetic to their gender identity<sup>63</sup>. Maintaining the trust and confidentiality of the gender variant youth is, therefore, paramount. For example, when a student discloses their gender identity, ask them what name they would prefer to be called, what pronouns they would prefer you to use with them, talk to them about who they have disclosed to, who is and is not supportive, and who they would like help disclosing to. Do not talk to anyone about their identity, including parents/caregivers, to whom they have not already disclosed their gender identity.

The disclosure of their gender identity is one of the

**HETEROSEXISM:**

The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that this sexual orientation is superior. Heterosexism is often expressed in more subtle forms than homophobia.

most challenging and important pronouncements gender variant individuals share with others. For many, it may signify the end point of a very long internal struggle to be secretive with their identity because of fear or shame.<sup>64</sup>

Disclosure of one’s identity is a milestone that may signify self-acceptance of their identity and the beginning of a ‘new life’.<sup>65</sup> It is important, however, to talk to the gender variant youth about the potential range of reactions to this disclosure within the school community and within the family. Discuss with them the possibility of rejection, harassment, verbal abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, and aid the gender variant youth in developing coping mechanisms.<sup>66</sup> Assist them in identifying resources where they can get information and support (see also the list of resources at the end of this document). Become actively involved in the creation of the school as a safe space for the gender variant student by addressing instances of bullying and harassment immediately, providing inclusive sexual health education programming and educating the entire school community about gender identity issues. For example, organize guest speakers at school assemblies who are gender variant, show films about gender identity issues in the classroom, and ensure that there is literature in the school library related to gender identity.

## What can the schools do to support gender variant youth?

### Provide a Safe Environment

The most important task for schools is to provide a safe, nurturing, non-violent atmosphere in which to learn, to grow, and to develop for all students, inclusive of all gender identities. Today, Canadian society is more diverse than ever before and educators, school administrators and other people involved with school-aged youth need to become informed of these diverse identities, including gender identities. The first important step for educators is acknowledging that gender variant youth exist in the school system and that expressing various gender identities is an acceptable way of living. Schools should not wait until a gender variant student comes forward to address the

issue. By the time a student makes their identity known it is likely that they have been struggling on their own for some time.

### Develop School-wide Policies

Gender identity issues need to be handled with dignity and respect in the school system and be clearly outlined through inclusive policies and procedures. School administrators, teaching and support faculty can improve the school environment for gender variant students and foster an environment where people of all gender identities can be themselves, by learning about and providing accurate information about gender diversity, and by supporting gender variant students through inclusive school policy.<sup>67</sup> Educators themselves may also feel more supported when addressing gender identity issues in the school-setting when anti-harassment policies are in place.<sup>68</sup>

#### ALLY:

A person, regardless of his or her sexual orientation, who supports the human, civil, and sexual rights of sexual minorities

For example, a mission statement can be created for the school that affirms gender identity and demonstrates that the school is a safe space where everyone is valued.<sup>69</sup>

A policy against harassment and violence against gender variant individuals should be implemented in the school. By adding ‘gender identity’ to the school’s non-discrimination policies, gender variant individuals will be given legal recourse if they have been bullied or victimized. It will also send a message to the school community that gender variant people are worthy of respect and that violence and discrimination will not be tolerated.

When harassment and violence are observed and/or reported, educators and administrators have a duty to react immediately and to create an environment where disrespect of any kind will not be ignored, and to build an understanding among all students of how both words and actions can hurt others.<sup>70</sup> There are many different

**HOMOPHOBIA:**

Fear and/or hatred of homosexuality in others, often exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, or acts of violence. Similarly, “transphobia” refers to the fear and/or hatred of transgender individuals and is exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, or acts of violence. “Biphobia” refers to the fear and/or hatred of bisexual individuals and is exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation or acts of violence.

ways for educators to deal with situations of transphobia in the school, including<sup>71</sup> :

- addressing assumptions that being gender variant is a bad thing and stressing that everyone in the school environment deserves to be respected;
- confronting the stereotypes and misinformation behind the insults and abuse; and,
- making a plan with students for more appropriate responses to insults rather than physical violence or reverse name-calling.

Students should also be aware of where they can go if they have experienced harassment or abuse and they should be given the option of anonymous reporting<sup>72</sup>, since some students may fear retribution for reporting victimization. The names of staff who are most knowledgeable regarding gender identity issues should be identified and publicized within the school so students can access the appropriate person/people to contact if they have questions or concerns.<sup>73</sup> To resolve problems quickly and to avoid stigmatizing the gender variant person in the situation, allies and role models should be located near areas of the school where students are likely to encounter prejudice from peers (i.e., near bathrooms and/or locker rooms).

Inclusive language should be included on all school-wide forms, printed material and websites. For example, schools should consider

adding categories other than male and female on all forms so as not to ignore the variety of gender identities. Such categories may include transgender, two-spirit, and gender variant. By using more inclusive language, not only will

gender variant youth feel more supported but it will also help to educate the entire school community about gender diversity. A mechanism should also be in place for those students who wish to change their gender designation on school records (i.e., students who are trans-

**PASSING:**

Refers to when gender variant individuals portray their self-identified gender to others in a way that others correctly perceive this self-identified gender. When this happens, that gender variant individual is said to be “passing”.

itioning should have their new gender reflected on documents including ID cards, transcripts etc.).<sup>74</sup> The names of individuals within the guidance/registrar’s office who can facilitate name and gender changes on school records should be clearly publicized and a simple, one-stop procedure should be in place for transitioning youth.<sup>75</sup>

**Professional Development Opportunities**

Educators should be given the opportunity for in-service training and development on gender identity issues.<sup>76</sup> While educators may recognize the need to address issues of gender identity in the school, many teachers and school administrators are not sufficiently trained and may not feel comfortable taking on that role.<sup>77</sup> Educators should be able to reflect on their personal assumptions and beliefs about gender roles in order to facilitate a non-judgmental learning environment.<sup>78</sup> Training sessions on gender identity issues should be made available for all staff. For example, Professional Development days could have workshops or presentations to raise awareness and levels of knowledge about the experiences and needs of gender variant students.

These workshops could provide an opportunity to discuss the skills needed to be a good ally and to develop an ‘action plan’ or list of concrete actions needed to improve the school environment for people of all genders.<sup>79</sup> Training should also be supported at the administrative level to allow for the appropriate subject matter and time requirements needed for learning.

### Raise Awareness

By educating the entire school community on gender identity issues, educators and administrators can help to reduce the risks of discrimination, stigmatization, and marginalization experienced by gender variant youth.<sup>80</sup> Opportunities should be provided for the entire school body to learn about gender diversity through activities such as public seminars or presentations, distribution of educational materials and hosting performances that challenge gender norms and/or educate on gender identity issues.<sup>81</sup> The school could also have an event or activity to commemorate the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20). Furthermore, a web-based school resource guide outlining the school’s policy on sexual orientation and gender identity can be developed and distributed for new, existing and prospective gender variant students and staff.<sup>82</sup> When including all students in learning and awareness activities you are affirming and enhancing the self-esteem and sense of self of gender variant youth and fostering an environment of tolerance for all students.

### Challenge Gender Norms

School policies that segregate students by gender ignore and stigmatize individuals who challenge the typical “male” or “female” notions and can cause emotional, and psychological distress for students.<sup>83</sup> Educators should challenge gender norms within the classroom and school community, such as “only boys play rough sports” or “only girls wear nailpolish”<sup>84</sup> and avoid activities that require students to choose a gender (e.g.,

avoid dividing the class into boys and girls groups for activities). All school organizations, clubs and

**LGBTQ:**  
A commonly used acronym for the constellation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, and queer identities. Sexual minority is a synonymous term.

teams should be supportive and create a welcoming space for all students. Gender variant youth should be allowed to join sports teams according to their self-identified gender as opposed to requiring them to join based on

their biological sex.<sup>85</sup> Gender variant individuals should not have to disclose their gender in order to participate if they are not ready.

One of the main areas where gender variant people experience psychological/ emotional distress and harassment is in the use of public washrooms. To avoid potential conflicts, publicize to all students and faculty the location of single occupancy bathrooms and designated gender neutral facilities including the creation of private showers in locker rooms with curtains or doors. Schools can also create a gender neutral restroom so gender variant individuals can use the restroom they find appropriate.<sup>86</sup>

### What can the schools do to support the parents/caregivers of gender variant youth?

Families are not always a safe place for gender variant youth. It is important not to involve the parents/caregivers of gender variant youth unless the youth themselves have already disclosed their identity to their families or you have a legal duty to report such as in the case of risk of self-harm. The gender variant youth may be put at risk within their homes if parents/caregivers who were unaware of their child’s identity are approached by the school.

**COMING OUT:**

Often refers to “coming out of the closet”—the act of disclosing one’s sexual orientation or gender identity (e.g., to friends, family members, colleagues).

Parents/caregivers whose children “come out” (disclose their identity) to them may have a variety of reactions ranging from loving acceptance to rejection and expulsion of the child from the home.<sup>87</sup> Parents/caregivers who discover their child’s gender identity accidentally may be in emotional crisis. All parents/caregivers of gender variant youth can be supported by directing them to community and counselling resources and support groups to help deal with the range of emotions including shock, anger, grief, guilt, and shame. Parents/caregivers will likely be seeking answers to many questions and should be provided with information on gender identity to educate them on what their child is experiencing and why, as well as the health and safety concerns of their gender variant child.<sup>88</sup> Parents/caregivers of gender variant youth may need help in understanding that the gender identity was not caused by poor parenting, nor did their child choose it.

Well-informed and accepting parents/caregivers can be allies in ensuring the healthy development and resiliency of gender variant youth. For example, parents/caregivers can help gender variant youth learn techniques of recognizing and combating stigma, discrimination, and verbal abuse, and to develop coping strategies.<sup>89</sup> All children, regardless of gender identity, need support, acceptance, and compassion from their families to thrive and parents/caregivers should be supported in this role to ensure the healthy development of gender variant youth.

## How can the schools build resiliency among gender variant youth?

Resiliency is a person’s ability to overcome adversity and effectively cope with and adapt to stressful and challenging situations in life. While the school setting can often be a stressful environment for gender variant youth, schools can take steps to become a safe and respectful place for them.

‘Safe spaces’ should be created in the school where gender variant youth are welcome and can find a sense of belonging. Gender variant students often feel isolated. Creating a support or social group where they feel part of a community can lead to greater sense of self-worth and increase the likelihood that they will remain in school. Research indicates that low school attachment, high feelings of alienation from school and peers leads to greater risk of dropping out.<sup>90</sup>

Gender identity resources should also be made available in the school libraries and be included in the curricula.<sup>91</sup> Educators should also consider introducing resources into their planning which address prejudices and gender identity issues (for a list of resources, see the list at the end of this document).<sup>92</sup> Exposing students to gender identity issues and resources will not cause students to question their gender identity. Rather, it provides assurance to the students who already know that they are different that they are not alone.<sup>93</sup>

While not all youth require the same supports in order to become more resilient, a Canadian study<sup>94</sup> found that there were seven common protective factors shared by resilient youth:

- access to material resources (i.e., availability of food, clothing, shelter, education and health services);
- access to supportive relationships (i.e., relationships with family, peers and community);
- development of a desirable personal identity (i.e., having a sense of purpose, aspirations and beliefs);
- experiences of power and control (i.e., ability to affect change in social and physical environment);
- adherence to cultural traditions (i.e., adherence to or knowledge of cultural practice and values);
- experiences of social justice (i.e., finding a meaningful role, acceptance and social equity in the community); and
- experience of a sense of cohesion with others (i.e., balancing personal interests with a sense of responsibility for the larger community).

By providing the appropriate support systems, schools have the capacity to build the resiliency of gender variant youth. Not all gender variant youth will feel comfortable in a school that is not aware or supportive of their needs. With the appropriate resources and role models, gender variant youth have a greater chance of overcoming their struggles of discovering and developing their gender identity. The tolerance and acceptance of gender diversity in a school setting will also create an atmosphere of safety for other students who are or who may feel different.

## Concluding Remarks

It is paramount that professionals working with gender variant youth ensure that the young person's rights and dignity are respected. It is important that evidenced-based strategies, such as those found in this document, are used to support age-appropriate discussions on gender, sexual health, and informed decision-making. The *Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education* is a resource that educators, school administrators and health professionals can use to assess their current sexual health education programs, to plan and implement sexual health education that is inclusive of the health, safety, and educational needs of gender variant youth, and to monitor and evaluate those programs to ensure that they are accurate, evidence-based and non-judgmental.

The failure to respond adequately to the educational, social, cultural and public health needs of gender variant youth removes these youth from key supports and protective factors in their lives. Lack of supports and protective factors, particularly within the school system where they spend much of their time, increases the risks they experience as vulnerable youth and may encourage them to leave school altogether. It is critical that the schools work to support gender variant youth to develop resilience, and to become healthy, happy and productive adults.

## Additional Resources

The opinions expressed in these resources are those of the authors/researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Note: Before using these resources with students, it is advisable to preview them as some may contain sensitive content and may not be appropriate for all ages.

### I. Organizations

#### AlterHéros

[www.alterheros.com](http://www.alterheros.com)

C.P. 476, succursale C,  
Montréal, QC H2L 4K4  
Tel: (514) 846-1398 • Email: [info@alterheros.com](mailto:info@alterheros.com)

AlterHéros is a non-profit organization that serves gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth. The organization disseminates information to youth, parents, family and friends; provides aid and support to youth; and creates a mutual support network for youth where they can share experiences and connect with others.

#### Canadian Federation for Sexual Health

[www.cfsh.ca](http://www.cfsh.ca)

2197 Riverside Drive, Suite 430  
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 7X3  
Tel: (613) 241-4474 • Fax: (613) 241-7550  
Email: [admin@cfsh.ca](mailto:admin@cfsh.ca)

#### Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition

[www.rainbowhealth.ca](http://www.rainbowhealth.ca)

P.O. Box 3043  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3S9  
Toll Free: 1-800-955-5129 • Fax: (306) 955-5132  
Email: [info@rainbowhealth.ca](mailto:info@rainbowhealth.ca)

The Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition (CRHC) is a national organization whose objective is to address the various health and wellness issues that people who have sexual and emotional relationships with people of the same gender, or a gender identity that does not conform to the identity assigned to them at birth, encounter.

#### Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health

[www.cpath.ca](http://www.cpath.ca)

201-1770 Fort Street,  
Victoria, British Columbia V8R 1J5  
Tel: (250) 592-6183 • Fax: (250) 592-6123  
Email: [info@cpath.ca](mailto:info@cpath.ca)

The Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health (CPATH) is a professional organization devoted to the health care of individuals with gender variant identities.

#### Centre for Suicide Prevention

[www.suicideinfo.ca](http://www.suicideinfo.ca)

Suite 320, 1202 Centre Street S.E.  
Calgary, Alberta T2G 5A5  
Tel: (403) 245-3900 • Fax: (403) 245-0299  
Email: [csp@suicideinfo.ca](mailto:csp@suicideinfo.ca)

The Centre for Suicide Prevention (CSP) is an education centre specializing in curriculum development; training programs; library and information services. The purpose of the Centre is to inform and equip people with additional knowledge and skills in the prevention of suicide.

#### EGALE

[www.egale.ca](http://www.egale.ca)

Tel: (613) 230-1043 Toll • Free: 1-888-204-7777  
Fax: (416) 642-6435  
Email: [egale.canada@egale.ca](mailto:egale.canada@egale.ca)

Egale Canada is a national organization committed to advancing equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-identified people, and their families, across Canada.

## Fondation Émergence

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

C.P. 1006, succursale C

Montréal, Québec H2L 4V2

Tel: (514) 866 -6788 • Fax: (514) 866-8157

Email: [courrier@fondationemergence.org](mailto:courrier@fondationemergence.org)

Fondation Émergence works to fight prejudice against sexual minorities through educational campaigns and research, dissemination of educational material to the public, and financial support to organizations providing services to sexual minorities.

## Gai Écoute

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

C.P. 1006, succursale C

Montréal, Québec H2L 4V2

Tel: 1-888-505-1010 or (514) 866-0103

or \*1010 for Telus customers

Fax: (514) 866-8157

Email: [aide@gaiecouste.org](mailto:aide@gaiecouste.org)

Gai Écoute offers confidential, anonymous, and free services to those with questions about sexual orientation. Gai Écoute is committed to fighting feelings of isolation, solitude and invisibility among gay and lesbian youth. They provide telephone support with trained support staff; dissemination of printed materials; email support; and one-on-one chats. Gai Écoute also offers suicide prevention support.

## Gender Identity Research and Education Society

[www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)

Melverley

The Warren

Ashted

Surrey, United Kingdom KT21 2SP

Tel: 01372 801554 • Email: [info@gires.org.uk](mailto:info@gires.org.uk)

The focus of GIRES is on people who experience atypical gender identity development, especially trans people, whether or not they are also affected by lesbian, gay, bisexual or intersex issues.

## GRIS Montréal

[www.gris.ca](http://www.gris.ca)

204-2075 rue Plessis,

Montréal, Québec H2L 4K4

Tel: (514) 590-0016 • Fax: (514) 590-0764

Email: [info@gris.ca](mailto:info@gris.ca)

GRIS-Montreal (Groupe de Recherche et d'Intervention Sociale) is a non-profit organization who aims to create a better awareness of homosexuality and issues faced by gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals. GRIS-Montreal focuses most of its actions in the school system. Some of their work includes providing workshops on homosexuality to schools and other institutions or organizations in the Greater Montreal Area.

### Other Locations:

GRIS-Chaudière-Appalaches

[www.grischap.qc.ca](http://www.grischap.qc.ca)

253, route 108,

Beauceville, Québec G5X 2Z3

Tél: 418-774-4210 • Téléc: 418-948-9154

Courriel: [infogrisca@gmail.com](mailto:infogrisca@gmail.com)

GRIS-Québec

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

201-363, rue de la Couronne

Québec, Québec G1K 6E9

Tél: 418-523-5572

Courriel: [info@grisquebec.org](mailto:info@grisquebec.org)

## PFLAG

[www.pflagcanada.ca](http://www.pflagcanada.ca)

1633 Mountain Road, Box 29211

Moncton, New Brunswick E1G 4R3

Tel: (506) 869-8191

Toll Free: 1-888-530-6777 (English)

Toll Free French Support Line: 1-888-530-6483

Fax: (506) 387-8349

Email: [execdirector@pflagcanada.ca](mailto:execdirector@pflagcanada.ca)

PFLAG Canada is Canada's only national organization that helps all Canadians who are struggling with issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. PFLAG Canada supports, educates and provides resources to parents, families, friends and colleagues with questions or concerns.

### Projet 10

[www.p10.qc.ca](http://www.p10.qc.ca)

307-2075 rue Plessis,

Montréal, Québec H2L 2Y4

Tel: (514) 989-4585 • Email: [projet10@p10.qc.ca](mailto:projet10@p10.qc.ca)

Projet 10 works to promote the personal, social, sexual and mental well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex and questioning youth and adults aged 14-25 years, living in the greater Montréal area. They offer a phone line for peer support, crisis counselling, information and referrals to LG-BITTQ services; individual counselling sessions for youths and/or their families to discuss issues related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity; accompaniment services (e.g., to doctor's appointments, HIV testing, social assistance offices, interviews for cooperative housing, court appearances); drop-in, facilitated group sessions; social assistance in finding affordable housing, employment, changing name and sex designation on official identity papers, accessing sex-change surgery, immigration/refugee status, filing legal complaints; educational workshops for youth, teachers, and health and social service workers who interact with youth of diverse sexual and/or gender identities; and establishing a Trans Health Database of physicians, therapists, and other health care professionals who are equipped to work with trans individuals in an open and non-judgmental way.

### Public Health Agency of Canada

[www.publichealth.gc.ca/sti](http://www.publichealth.gc.ca/sti)

Sexual Health and Sexually Transmitted Infections Section

Community Acquired Infections Division

Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control

100 Eglantine Driveway, Health Canada Building

A.L. 0602C, Tunney's Pasture

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Fax: (613) 957-0381

### Rainbow Health Ontario

[www.RainbowHealthOntario.ca](http://www.RainbowHealthOntario.ca)

Sherbourne Health Centre

333 Sherbourne Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Toronto, Ontario M5A 2S5

Tel: (416) 324-4100 ext. 5058

Fax: (416) 324-4259

Email: [info@rainbowhealthontario.ca](mailto:info@rainbowhealthontario.ca)

Rainbow Health Ontario (RHO) is a province-wide program that works to improve the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people in Ontario through education, research, outreach and public policy advocacy.

### Sexuality and U

[www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca)

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

780 Echo Drive,

Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5R7

Tel: (613) 730-4192 • Toll free: 1-800-561-2416

Fax: (613) 730-4314

Email: [helpdesk@sogc.com](mailto:helpdesk@sogc.com)

[www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca) is committed to providing youth with credible and up-to-date information and education on sexual health.

### **Sherbourne Health Centre**

[www.sherbourne.on.ca](http://www.sherbourne.on.ca)

333 Sherbourne Street,  
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2S5  
Tel: (416) 324-4103 • Fax: (416) 324-4262  
E-mail: [info@sherbourne.on.ca](mailto:info@sherbourne.on.ca)

Sherbourne Health Centre offers a wide range of primary health care programs and services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, intersex, queer, or questioning individuals. Their goal is to provide you with dignified, non-judgemental services to help you feel better, cope better with day-to-day challenges, and address specific LGBT health issues.

### **Suicide Action Montréal**

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

2345 Bélanger St,  
Montréal, Québec H2G 1C9  
Tel: (514) 723-4000  
or 1-866-277-3553 elsewhere in Québec

Suicide Action Montreal is an organization which aims to prevent suicide and help survivors of suicide cope with the repercussions. The organization offers services to people contemplating suicide, to their social network and to the health and social service professionals who work with them. They offer support services, crisis intervention, and monitoring for people who are at risk of committing suicide, for their friends and family, and for people affected by suicide. All communication is confidential, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is free of charge.

### **World Professional Association for Transgender Health**

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

South Second Street, Suite 180  
Minneapolis, Minneapolis 55454  
Email: [wpath@wpath.org](mailto:wpath@wpath.org)1300

As an international multidisciplinary professional Association the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's (WPATH) mission is to promote evidence based care, education, research, advocacy, public policy and respect in transgender health.

## **II. Programs**

### **American Library Association**

#### **Rainbow Project**

[www.rainbowlist.wordpress.com](http://www.rainbowlist.wordpress.com)

The Rainbow Project is a joint project of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table and the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association. The Rainbow Project presents an annual bibliography of quality books with significant and authentic GLBTQ content, which are recommended for people from birth through eighteen years of age.

### **Camp fYrefly**

[www.fyrefly.ualberta.ca](http://www.fyrefly.ualberta.ca)

7-104 Education North  
Faculty of Education, University of Alberta  
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2G5  
Tel: (780) 492-0772 • Fax: (780) 492-2024  
Email: [fyrefly@ualberta.ca](mailto:fyrefly@ualberta.ca)

Camp fYrefly is an educational, social, and personal learning retreat for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, two-spirited, queer, and allied (LGBTQ&A) youth. It focuses on building and nurturing their leadership potential and personal resiliency in an effort to help them learn how to make significant contributions to their own lives and to their schools, home/group-home environments, and communities. The camp is designed for LGBTQ&A youth between the ages of 14 and 24.

## Rainbow Resource Centre

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

170 Scott Street

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L 0L3

Tel: (204) 474.0212 • Fax: (204) 478.1160

Email: [info@rainbowresourcecentre.org](mailto:info@rainbowresourcecentre.org)

The Rainbow Resource Centre is a not-for-profit community organization that provides support and resources to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and two-spirit communities of Manitoba and North Western Ontario.

## Supporting our Youth

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

333 Sherbourne Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Toronto, Ontario M5A 2S5

Tel: (416) 324-5077 • Fax: (416) 324-4188

Email: [soy@sherbourne.on.ca](mailto:soy@sherbourne.on.ca)

Supporting Our Youth (SOY) is an exciting, dynamic community development project designed to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgendered youth in Toronto through the active involvement of youth and adult communities. It works to create healthy arts, culture and recreational spaces for young people; to provide supportive housing and employment opportunities; and to increase youth access to adult mentoring and support.

## Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

Transgender Health Program

<http://transhealth.vch.ca>

Vancouver Coastal Health Corporate Office

11<sup>th</sup> Floor, 601 West Broadway

Vancouver, British Columbia V5Z 4C2

Tel: (604) 736-2033

Toll Free: 1-866-884-0888

## III. Non-fiction Books

**Brill, S., & Pepper, R. (2008). *Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals*. San Francisco, CA.: Cleis Press.**

"... explores the unique challenges that thousands of families face every day raising their children in every city and state. Through extensive research and interviews, as well as years of experience working in the field, the authors cover gender variance from birth through college. What do you do when your toddler daughter's first sentence is that she's a boy? What will happen when your preschool son insists on wearing a dress to school? Is this ever just a phase? How can you explain this to your neighbors and family? How can parents advocate for their children in elementary schools? What are the current laws on the rights of transgender children? What do doctors specializing in gender variant children recommend? What do the therapists say? What advice do other families who have trans kids have? What about hormone blockers and surgery? What issues should your college-bound trans child be thinking about when selecting a school? How can I best raise my gender variant or transgender child with love and compassion, even when I barely understand the issues ahead of us? And what is gender, anyway? These questions and more are answered in this book offering a deeper understanding of gender variant and transgender children and teens."<sup>95</sup>

**Central Toronto Youth Services (2008). *Families in TRANSition: A Resource Guide for Parents of Trans Youth*. Toronto, ON: Central Toronto Youth Services.**

"Families In TRANSition: A Resource Guide for Parents of Trans Youth is the first comprehensive Canadian publication to address the needs of parents and families supporting their trans children. Families in TRANSition summarizes the experiences, strategies, and successes of a working group of community consultants – researchers, counsellors, parents, advocates as well as trans youth themselves. Families in TRANSition provides the stories of parents and youth along with practical and sensitive parent-to-parent and professional therapeutic advice."<sup>96</sup>

**Central Toronto Youth Services. (2009).** *Trans Youth at School Guide*. Toronto, ON: Central Toronto Youth Services.

"This Bulletin provides recommendations for school administration to help create welcoming and supportive schools for trans youth."<sup>97</sup>

**Gay and Lesbian Medical Association. (2006).** *Guidelines for care of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients*. San Francisco, CA: Gay and Lesbian Medical Association.

**Huegel, K. (2003).** *GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for Queer & Questioning Teens*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

**Killoran, I., & Jimenez, K.P. (2007).** *Unleashing the Unpopular: Talking About Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity in Education*. Olney, MD: Association for Childhood Education International.

"This new publication is a unique teacher education resource that strives to improve understanding of issues related to sexual orientation, gender diversity, and education, and how they affect students, teachers, schools, and the community. Personal narratives offer insight into experiences of LGBT students and teachers in schools...The authors discuss barriers to successfully supporting LGBT students, teachers, and parents; and explore the reasons behind action or inaction, the effects of not having a supportive policy around LGBT issues, and possible solutions to the concerns. Educators share their successes and failures in their attempts to address gender diversity and sexual orientation in the classroom and/or school community. They provide strategies for introducing, supporting, and engaging students in dialogue, advocacy, and arts-based activities."<sup>98</sup>

**Lagartera, R. (2009).** *Shout Out: Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia and Heterosexism*. Winnipeg, MB: Rainbow Resource Centre.

"The purpose of this booklet is to share information about some of the challenges, provide resources to help you cope, and let you know loud and clear: you are not alone!"<sup>99</sup>

**Lambda Legal and the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC). (2004)** *Bending the Mould – An Action Kit for Transgender Youth*. New York, NY: Lambda Legal.

"...this kit is designed to help you make your school a safer place. We've included ideas and information to help you advocate for change. There's also an extensive list of resources to help you connect with the transgender community and find support."<sup>100</sup>

**Letts, W.J., & Sears, J.T.; (1999).** *Queering Elementary Education: Advancing the Dialogue about Sexualities and Schooling*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

"... these provocative and thoughtful essays advocate the creation of classrooms that challenge categorical thinking, promote interpersonal intelligence, and foster critical consciousness. Queer elementary classrooms are those where parents and educators care enough about their children to trust the human capacity for understanding and their educative abilities to foster insight into the human condition....Queering education means bracketing our simplest classroom activities in which we routinely equate sexual identities with sexual acts, privilege the heterosexual condition, and presume sexual destinies. Queer teachers are those who develop curriculum and pedagogy that afford every child dignity rooted in self-worth and esteem for others."<sup>101</sup>

**Lev, A.I. (2004).** *Transgender Emergence: Therapeutic Guidelines for Working with Gender-Variant People and Their Families*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, Inc.

"This comprehensive book provides you with a clinical and theoretical overview of the issues facing transgendered/transsexual people and their families. Transgender Emergence: Therapeutic Guidelines for Working with Gender-Variant People and Their Families views assessment and treatment through a nonpathologizing lens that honours human diversity and acknowledges the role of oppression in the developmental process of gender identity formation."<sup>102</sup>

**Makadon, H.J., Mayer, K.H., Potter, J., & Goldhammer, H. (2008).** *Fenway Guide to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Health*. Philadelphia, PA: American College of Physicians.

"The Fenway Guide provides guidance, practical guidelines, and discussions of clinical issues pertinent to the LGBT patient and community. It also focuses on helping healthcare professionals gain a better understanding of the LGBT population, the LGBT life continuum, health promotion and disease prevention, transgender health, and patient communication and the office environment."<sup>103</sup>

**Public Health Agency of Canada. (2008).** *Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education*. Ottawa, ON: Public Health Agency of Canada.

**Simpson, A.J. & Goldberg, J.M. (2006).** *Let's talk trans. A resource for trans and questioning youth*. Vancouver, BC: Vancouver Coastal Health, Transcend Transgender Support & Education Society and Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition.

"This booklet is for youth who want information about being trans, gender transition, coming out as trans, or finding resources and getting support."<sup>104</sup>

**Wells, K. (2006).** *Gay-Straight Student Alliance Handbook*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Teachers' Federation.

"This handbook is part of a series of bisexual, gay, lesbian, trans-identified and two-spirited (BGLTT) educational resources produced by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. It is designed to assist teachers, school administrators and counsellors in understanding the educational, health and safety needs of those students who are or are perceived as being BGLTT. Other titles in this series include *Seeing the Rainbow: Teachers Talk About Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender and Two-Spirited Realities* (2002) and *Lessons Learned: A Collection of Stories and Articles About Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Issues* (2005). *A Comprehensive Resource for Canadian K-12 Teachers, Administrators and School Counsellors*."<sup>105</sup>

## IV. Fiction Books

**Ewert, M., & Ray, R. (2008).** *10,000 Dresses*. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press.  
**Reading level: Ages 4-8**

"Every night, Bailey dreams about magical dresses: dresses made of crystals and rainbows, dresses made of flowers, dresses made of windows...Unfortunately, when Bailey's awake, no one wants to hear about these beautiful dreams. Quite the contrary: "You're a BOY!" Mother and Father tell Bailey. "You shouldn't be thinking about dresses at all." Then Bailey meets Laurel, an older girl who is touched and inspired by Bailey's imagination and courage. In friendship, the two of them begin making dresses together. And Bailey becomes the girl she always dreamed she'd be!"<sup>106</sup>

## V. Films

***No Dumb Questions* (2001).**  
**Run time: 24 minutes, Rating: NR (Not Rated)**

"Uncle Bill is becoming a woman. This lighthearted and poignant documentary profiles three sisters, ages 6, 9 and 11, struggling to understand why and how their Uncle Bill is becoming a woman. These girls love their Uncle Bill, but will they feel the same way when he becomes their new Aunt Barbara? With just weeks until Bill's first visit as Barbara, the sisters navigate the complex territories of anatomy, sexuality, personality, gender and fashion. Their reactions are funny, touching, and distinctly different."<sup>107</sup>

***Southern Comfort* (2001)**  
**Run time: 90 minutes, Rating: NR (Not rated)**

"With a rare blend of humour, tragedy & romance, *Southern Comfort* tells the remarkable story of Robert Eads, a 52 year old wise cracking cowboy who was born female. The film finds Robert 15 years later during the last year of his life as he falls into a passionate romance with Lola who was born male."<sup>108</sup>

**Toilet Training (2003)**

**Run time: 30 minutes, Rating: NR (Not Rated)**

“The video addresses the persistent discrimination, harassment, and violence that people who transgress gender norms face in gender segregated bathrooms. Using the stories of people who have been harassed, arrested or beaten for trying to use bathrooms, Toilet Training focuses on bathroom access in public space, in schools, and at work.”<sup>109</sup>

**Transamerica (2005)**

**Run time: 103 minutes, Rating: R**

“...a small but rich movie about Bree--formerly Stanley--a pre-operative male-to-female transsexual awaiting gender-reassignment surgery who learns she has a wayward teenage son named Toby. When her therapist strongarms Bree into facing her past, she bails Toby out of jail and they end up on a road trip across the country.”<sup>110</sup>

**TransGeneration (2005)**

**Run time: 272 minutes, Rating: NR (Not Rated)**

“What is it like to be a man trapped in a woman's body? How does a woman become a man? TRANS-GENERATION, a dramatic and mesmerizing eight-part series, is a year-in-the-life look at four college students--Gabbie, Lucas, Raci, and T.S.—who are juggling the challenges of academia with their commitment to transition from their birth sex.

Faced with life-altering choices--about how to deal with parents and society, whether or not to take hormone therapy and undergo sex re-assignment surgery--these four remarkable individuals deal with their deeply misunderstood identities in starkly unique ways. In every moment of this radical, paradigm-busting film, these collegiate transgendered students blow up stereotypes while coming to terms with how to change their bodies to fit their minds.”<sup>111</sup>

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## **A Curated List of SOGI-Inclusive Books for K-12 Schools**



### ***Picture Books to Discuss Family Diversity***

- **Donavan's Big Day** – Lesléa Newman (Illus. Mike Dutton) 2011  
Donovan is incredibly excited to be a part of the planning and execution of a big family wedding. When readers get further into the story, they realize that Donovan's mom is getting married to another woman. Excellent choice to teach surprise endings and discuss whether this is still surprising to them.
- **A Family is a Family is a Family [Une famille... c'est une famille]** – Sara O'Leary (Illus. Qin Leng) 2016  
A young girl is worried that she won't be able to explain the makeup of her family to her classmates. Each child has a different approach to how they define "family" however, some of them including same-gender couples as parents, some with single parents, some with grandparents as parents, etc.
- **A Plan for Pops [Une idée pour Papi]** – Heather Smith (Illus. Brooke Kerrigan) 2019  
A positive and empowering book that inspires children to learn how to handle challenges and help others. The bond between child and loving, interracial gay male grandparents is warm, palpable, and uplifting.
- **Stella Brings the Family** – Miriam B. Schiffer (Illus. Holly Clifton-Brown) 2015  
On Mother's Day, Stella's teacher wants students to spend time appreciating their mothers, but Stella has two dads, so what is she supposed to do? When the information comes to light, Stella tells her class how her family works, including the fact that she has a whole bunch of extended family looking out for her.
- **Our Subway Baby** – Peter Mercurio (Illus. Leo Espinosa) 2020  
Muted colors and soft illustrations help to tell the story of an infant abandoned in a New York City subway station and the two men who adopted him.
- **Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle** – Nina LaCour (Illus. Kaylani Juanita) 2022  
When a little girl's Mommy goes away for a work trip, her Mama does her best to keep them both busy. When Mommy returns, the little girl needs a minute to shake off the feelings of emptiness before things can go back to normal. This is a beautifully illustrated book that explores family, connection, absence, and reunions.

### ***Picture Books to Discuss LGBTQ+ History***

- **'Twas the Night Before Pride** – Joanna McClintick (Illus. Juana Medina) 2022  
A boldly illustrated and celebratory exploration of queer families, LGBTQ+ history—including the Stonewall riots, the fight for marriage equality, and the AIDS marches—and the excitement of Pride Parades, told through delightful rhyming text.
- **This Day in June** – Gayle E. Pitman (Illus. Kristyna Litten) 2014  
In June, LGBT history and culture are celebrated in many places around the world. In this particular picture book, Pitman's text and Litten's illustrations create a celebration of Pride and LGBT history in a child-friendly format that will make the subject easily accessible to many young people and their parents.
- **Pride Puppy** – Robin Stevenson (Illus. Julie McLaughlin) 2021  
An alphabet book set against the backdrop of a Pride celebration, the story follows a puppy that escapes its family and causes mischief wherever it goes! Bright and playful, this book will be sure to capture the attention of many children and their families.
- **Two Grooms on a Cake** – Rob Sanders (Illus. Robbie Cathro) 2021  
Back in 1971, long before gay marriage was legal in the United States, Jack Baker and Michael McConnell got married after a long fight to obtain a marriage license, including appeals to the Minnesota Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of the United States. An informative but oft-forgotten part of history and the fight for equal rights.

### ***Picture Books to Discuss Gender Stereotypes***

- **Amazing Grace** – Mary Hoffman (Illus. Caroline Binch) 1991  
When her school decides to perform Peter Pan, Grace longs to play the lead, but her classmates point out that Peter was a boy. Besides, he wasn't black. With the support of her family, Grace learns that she can be anything she wants to be, and the results are amazing!

- **Henry Holton Takes the Ice** – Sandra Bradley (Illus. Sara Palacios) 2015  
Henry's family is obsessed with Hockey, but Henry is less than effective when he hits the ice... at least while he's holding a hockey stick. When he lets go and allows himself to move more freely, he realizes that he actually loves skating, but more as an ice dancer than a hockey player.
- **I'm a Girl** – Yasmeen Ismail 2015  
Ismail's book celebrates what it means to feel like a girl or a boy, but also confronts stereotypes and complicates easy assumptions about gender roles. When the young girl protagonist meets a boy who likes to wear dresses and play with dolls, the two new friends find a lot more in common than they first thought.
- **Jacob's Room to Choose** – Sarah Hoffman (Illus. Ian Hoffman) 2019  
From the author of **Jacob's New Dress** comes an important story about gender expression, understanding gender diverse peers, and simply allowing people to use the washroom. When Jacob and his friend Sophie are each teased about using the incorrect bathroom, their teacher finds out what happened. Jacob, Sophie, and their teacher, lead change to build understanding and respect for gender differences at their school.
- **Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress** – Christine Baldacchino (Illus. Isabelle Malenfant) 2014  
Morris loves to play dress-up, but when he decides to wear his favourite tangerine dress to school one day, the other kids don't know how to react. Dresses are for girls, they say. Dresses are certainly not for boys, or astronauts, or any of the other things Morris dreams of being. But after spending a day home from school, he pulls himself together and confronts his peers, showing them that a dress is just another piece of clothing.

### ***Picture Books to Discuss Gender Identity***

- **47,000 Beads** – Koja Adeyoha and Angel Adeyoha (Illus. Holly McGillis) 2017  
Peyton loves to dance, but she isn't comfortable wearing a dress anymore, so she loses interest in dancing at the pow wow. When she finally tells her Auntie Eyota, Peyton is able to find the help that she needs. This book is a great starting point to discuss Two Spirit identities and gender stereotypes.
- **What Are Your Words? A Book About Pronouns** – Katherine Locke (Illus. Anne Passchier) 2021  
This fun and accessible introduction to gender-inclusive pronouns follows Ari through their neighborhood as they try to find the words they feel suit them best. As Ari meets their neighbours, they learn what words other people use to describe themselves, and along the way they realize that sometimes it takes a while to figure out what words work best.
- **I Am Jazz** – Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings (Illus. Shelagh McNicholas) 2014  
A picture book based on the real-life experiences of Jazz Jennings, *I Am Jazz* explores what it is like to be born in a body that doesn't fully match a child's internalized sense of their own gender. This book provides a valuable opportunity for starting conversations with parents and children.
- **Ho'onani: Hula Warrior** – Heather Gale (Illus. Mika Song) 2019  
Ho'onani doesn't feel like a wahine (girl) or kane (boy). Instead, she feels in-between, and she's okay with that. But when Ho'onani decides she wants to learn the perform the traditional kane hula chant, she discovers that it might not be so easy to take part in an all-male tradition. Based on a true story, *Ho'onani: Hula Warrior* celebrates identity, difference, and empowerment.
- **My Maddy** - Gayle E. Pitman (Illus. Violet Tobacco) 2020  
In the middle; in between; almost but not quite: all concepts that are highlighted in this picture book about a parent who is neither male nor female, neither father nor mother. Gender norms and gender expression are thoughtfully explored through various metaphors as the child and Maddy go about their days together.
- **My Rainbow** – DeShanna Neal & Trinity Neal (Illus. Art Twink) 2020  
Autistic trans girl Trinity wants to have long hair, but growing it out is too itchy! None of the wigs in the store are quite right, so Mom makes Trinity a special rainbow wig.
- **When Aidan Became a Brother** – Kyle Lukoff (Illus. Kaylani Juanita) 2019  
When Aidan was born, everyone thought he was a girl, but as he grew older, he realized he was a trans boy. When he finds out he is going to be a big brother, he learns the most important thing about being an older sibling: how to love with his whole self.

## **Fiction Books for Intermediate / Middle Grades** (SO) sexual orientation (GI) gender identity theme

- **The Best at It** – Maulik Pancholy 2019 (SO)  
Rahul, a 7th grade Indian-American boy growing up in a small town, deals with anxiety, bullies, racial prejudice, and being different by following his grandfather's advice – find something to be the best at. As Rahul figures out who he is, his best friend Chelsea and his family are there to cheer him on, and he hopes that just maybe his crush Justin will start to notice him.
- **The Fabulous Zed Watson** – Kevin Sylvester and Basil Sylvester 2021 (SOGI)  
Zed Watson loves their big rambunctious family, monsters, and most importantly, their name (which they chose for themselves!) After Zed discovers a mystery regarding an unpublished novel by their favourite author, they embark on a road trip with a small group to follow the clues and unravel the mystery. This book is, dare I say, fabulous!
- **Melissa** [previously published as *George*] – Alex Gino 2015 (GI)  
When people see George, they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy, and she really wants to be seen differently. When she finds out the school is casting a production of *Charlotte's Web*, she desperately wants to play the part of Charlotte. But will she be allowed?
- **Hurricane Child** – Kacen Callender 2018 (SOGI)  
Caroline is a child born during a large-scale tropical storm—a hurricane child. She feels entirely unlucky. Her friends have abandoned her (or maybe she just never had any?) and her mother left when she was young. But when she finds a new friend and comes across a mysterious lady in black, everything begins to change, including her conceptualization of gender and identity.
- **Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World** – Ashley Herring Blake 2018 (SO)  
In the wake of a destructive tornado, Ivy feels invisible and ignored. What's worse, her notebook filled with secret drawings of girls holding hands has gone missing, until the drawings start to reappear with notes from an anonymous friend. A stunning, tender novel about emerging identity, which exquisitely enriches the rare category of female middle-grade characters who like girls--and children's literature at large.
- **Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard, Book One: The Hammer of Thor [Le Marteau de Thor]** – Rick Riordan 2016 (SOGI)  
A particularly complex tale of gods and monsters, Magnus Chase brings a whole new dimension to Riordan's delightful series. In this particular case, Thor's hammer is missing, and it may be in enemy hands! Magnus and his friends are tasked with retrieving the hammer before the world is destroyed by giants. He is aided by his friends, of course, including a new acquaintance who may or may not be an enemy.
- **Obie is Man Enough** – Schuyler Bailar 2021 (GI)  
Transgender tween Obie knows that coming out will create a bit of a splash, but he is surprised when his swim coach forces him to leave the team, leaving Obie feeling alone, treading water until he can find a new place where he belongs. *Obie is Man Enough* is a sensitive and heartfelt exploration of identity, friendship, and belonging.
- **Answers in the Pages** – David Levithan 2022 (SO)  
After Donovan leaves a teacher-assigned book on the kitchen counter, he has no idea his mom will pick it up to read, much less that she will start an entire campaign to remove the book from the curriculum, all because the main characters are gay. Donovan is caught between his mom and his teacher, but he knows the book doesn't deserve to be banned. Three connected storylines work to create a bold and timely narrative about being brave and standing up for what's right.
- **Star-Crossed** – Barbara Dee 2018 (SO)  
Mattie is a reader, a socialite, and a fan of the theatre. At only thirteen, Mattie is also just figuring herself out. When she finds herself cast as Romeo, opposite her new crush, she's not totally sure what will happen, but in any case, she's excited to find out!
- **Too Bright to See** – Kyle Lukoff (2021) (GI)  
The summer before middle school, eleven-year-old Bug is not at all interested in makeup, or deciding which boys are cute, unlike her friend Moira. Bug is more interested in discovering the mystery of the ghost haunting that's haunting them. Along the way, Bug makes a big discovery—Bug is transgender.

## ***Non-Fiction Books for Middle Grades and Beyond***

- **Gay & Lesbian History for Kids: The Century-Long Struggle for LGBT Rights** – Jerome Pohlen 2015  
From Bayard Rustin to Alan Turing, from Harvey Milk to Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, Pohlen's text chronicles the incredible lives of LGBT individuals throughout history. Furthermore, Pohlen's book includes activities to get young readers thinking and allow them to find out more about LGBT people in significant events.
- **Pride: The Celebration and the Struggle** – Robin Stevenson 2020  
This book explores "Pride" beyond the parade. Like where it started or how many different ways it's celebrated around the globe? **Pride** is Canadian author, Robin Stevenson's contribution to an often-neglected discussion, especially among young people, but her book makes the subject accessible and relevant.
- **Sex is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and YOU [Sexe, ce drôle de mot]** – Cory Silverberg (Illus. Fiona Smyth) 2015  
An essential comic-book style guide for children (ages 8 - 10) that looks at family makeup, gender identity, sexuality, and bodies. The book will help open up conversations with adults—parents, teachers, librarians—and will give child readers a space to discuss and explore their own bodies and identities.
- **Growing Up Trans: In Our Own Words** – Eds. Lindsay Herriot & Kate Fry  
A collection of poetry, art, essays, short stories, by trans young people (ages 11-18). This collection also serves as a toolkit for youth who are not trans, as well as for parent and teachers working to become more effective allies. Includes guiding questions and educational resources by experts in the fields of trans studies and education.
- **Queer Ducks (and Other Animals): The Natural World of Animal Sexuality** – Eliot Schrefer (Illus. Jules Zuckerberg) 2022  
This upper middle-grade/YA nonfiction text explores the animal world in a whole new way, using humor, comics, and accessible science to show that same-sex sexual behavior is just as perfectly natural throughout the animal kingdom as it is within humanity. Filled with comics, humorous prose, accessible scientific studies, and interviews with researchers, *Queer Ducks* is a fabulously well-researched text that will provide tween/teen (and even adult) readers with a wealth of fascinating information.

## ***Graphic Novels***

- **Beetle and the Hollowbones** – Aliza Layne 2020  
This Stonewall Honor Book follows twelve-year-old Beetle, a goblin witch, caught between her friend Blob Ghost, her ex-best-friend Kat, and stopping the horrible magic that Kat's new mentor is trying to unleash. As Beetle, Blob Ghost, and Kat try to unravel the vile scheme, they discover a whole lot about each other in the process. Grades 3-7
- **The Deep & Dark Blue** – Niki Smith 2020  
This charming novel is poignant and empathetic while also providing the excitement of a fantasy epic. The fast-paced plot keeps readers engaged with assumed identities, righting injustice, magic and self-discovery while weaving in a beautifully handled transgender narrative. Grades 4-8
- **Flamer** – Mike Curato 2020  
For Aidan Navarro, camp used to be a happy place. But in the summer between middle school and high school Aidan finds himself going through a lot of changes. He is dealing with bullies and suddenly developing feelings for a boy named Elias, and he is forced to confront some difficult truths along the way. Grades 9-12
- **Surviving the City (Vol. 1 & 2)** – Tasha Spillett (Illus. Natasha Donovan & Donovan Yaciuk) 2019/2020  
This graphic novel series follows Miikwan (Anishinaabe) and Dez (Inninee) as they navigate the challenges of growing up in an urban landscape, but when Dez goes missing, Miikwan is devastated. Grades 7-8
- **Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me** – Mariko Tamaki (Illus. Rosemary Valero-O'Connell) 2019  
Multi-award winning, funny, heart-wrenching and spirited tale of young love that asks us to consider what happens when we ditch the toxic relationships we crave to embrace the healthy ones we need. Grades 9-12
- **Spinning** – Tillie Walden 2017  
Poignant and captivating, this award winning, powerful graphic memoir, *Spinning*, captures what it's like to come of age, come out, and come to terms with leaving behind everything you've known. An honest and intimate reflection on the power and pain of teen competitive sports. Grades 9-12

## ***Fiction Books for Secondary Students***

- **Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe [Aristote et Dante découvrent les secrets de l'univers]** – Benjamin Alire Sáenz 2012  
Aristotle's brother is in prison. Dante is a know-it-all. They end up meeting one day at the swimming pool, and their lives slowly begin to intertwine. Over time, the two boys start to develop more than feelings of friendship for one another, and although their parents are supportive, the two young men still find themselves coming up against challenges in their community.
- **Elatsoe** – Darcie Little Badger (Illus. Rovina Cai) 2020  
Darcie Little Badger's wildly celebrated debut follows an asexual, Apache teen named Elatsoe as she uses her powers—she can see ghosts and raise the spirits of dead animals—to unravel the mystery of her cousin's recent death: what, or who, actually killed him? Combining mystery, horror, ancestral knowledge, fantasy, and beautiful illustrations, *Elatsoe* is a triumph of storytelling.
- **The City Beautiful** – Aden Polydoros 2021  
*The City Beautiful* is a Jewish historical fantasy set in Chicago, 1893. Alter Rosen sees it as a land of opportunity and dreams that he will one day have enough money to bring his family to America. But when his best friend Yakov is the latest in a string of murders targeting Jewish boys, Alter's dreams start to turn into nightmares as Yakov's dybbuk possesses him in an effort to find out who the killer is.
- **When the Moon Was Ours** – Anna-Marie McLemore 2016  
Miel and Sam are inseparable, but they are known as strange throughout the community. Miel grows roses out of her wrist, and Sam paints moons that he later hangs in trees. But no matter how odd they may seem, the Bonner sisters are seen to be worse (considered witches). They want the roses growing from Miel's wrist, but no matter what they desire, there are many secrets still waiting to be laid bare.
- **Birthday** – Meredith Russo 2019  
Morgan and Eric are nearly inseparable, having been born on the same day, at the same time. Readers meet the two once a year, on their shared birthday, the narrative mapping how they each grow, change, and explore various aspects of gender and sexuality.
- **Black Flamingo** – Dean Atta 2020  
Michael is stuck. He never feels Greek or Black enough, or even the right kind of gay, especially when he discovers drag culture. Told in free verse by a renowned poet, this novel explores what it means to find a space to fit in.
- **Dress Codes for Small Towns** – Courtney C. Stevens 2017  
Billie McCaffrey is trying to fit the mold of everyone in her community. She is considered “one of the guys” but she doesn't like having any labels placed on her gender or sexuality. But when her family—particularly her father—gets involved, everyone starts to get complicated and confusing. Religion, sexuality, and gender expectations combine to create a fantastically multi-layered narrative.
- **Felix Ever After** – Kacen Callender 2020  
Award-winning author Kacen Callender brings a revelatory YA novel about transgender teen, Felix, grappling with identity and self-discovery while falling in love for the first time. Complicated feelings begin a journey of questioning and self-discovery that helps redefine his most important relationship: how he feels about himself. This is an honest and layered story about identity, falling in love, and recognizing the love you deserve.
- **Fire Song** – Adam Garnet Jones 2018  
Shane's sister has committed suicide, and he tries to share his grief with his emotionally detached girlfriend, but instead ends up turning to his best friend on the rez, David. Shane and David's relationship intensifies and begins to show signs of becoming more than a friendship. As their lives intertwine, they are forced to confront some harsh truths about themselves and their pasts. The novel features Indigenous representation.
- **Survive the Dome** – Kosoko Jackson 2022  
Jamal Lawson is an aspiring journalist and photographer who just wants to be a part of something big. When he goes to Baltimore to cover a protest about police brutality, the city activates a new safety protocol called the Dome. It surrounds the city and forces those within its boundaries to submit to a newly militarized police force. When Jamal meets a hacker named Marco (who he may or may not have feelings for), the two join forces to defy the lockdown and try to bring down the dome itself.

- **Kings, Queens and In-Betweens** – Tanya Boteju 2019  
An accessible and humorous exploration of gender and sexuality, experienced through the eyes of shy, awkward Nima Kumara-Clark, a biracial queer girl living in a small community. When a stranger invites Nima to a show one night, she finds herself drawn into a world she never expected, a world of drag kings and queens, a world of surprising possibilities, and unexpected new friendships.
- **Like a Love Story** – Abdi Nazemian 2019  
This award-winning novel follows a trio of teens as they navigate friendships, identity and heartaches amidst the hysteria and activism of 1989 New York City during the AIDS crisis. *Like a Love Story* interweaves compelling social drama and a political call to action that is at once historical and vitally relevant today.
- **More Happy Than Not** – Adam Silvera 2015  
Silvera is a master of the queer/questioning segment of YA literature. The Leteo Institute can erase memories, and Aaron wants that solution for himself, especially since his father committed suicide. But when Thomas shows up on the scene, Aaron wonders about his relationship with his girlfriend and his own identity.
- **None of the Above** – I.W. Gregario 2015  
A groundbreaking story about a teenage girl who discovers she was born intersex... and what happens when her secret is revealed to the entire school. Incredibly compelling and sensitively told, *None of the Above* is a thought-provoking novel that explores what it means to be a boy, a girl, or something in between.
- **Last Night at the Telegraph Club** – Malinda Lo 2021  
Lo's highly celebrated, multi-award-winning novel follows seventeen-year-old Lily Hu as she discovers she has feelings for other girls. But America in 1954 is not a safe place for queer people, and especially for Lily due to the red-scare paranoia that threatens her family's future within the country. Lily and her girlfriend Kath must decide if they are willing to risk everything to be openly queer in a society that would rather see them gone.

## ***Non-Fiction Books for Young Adults***

- **The ABCs of LGBT+** – Ashley Mardell 2016  
Far more than a simple guide to coming out or defining sexual/gender identities, this book is a critical examination of stereotypes that also explores the slipperiness of categories. Mardell's humor and wit also makes the book very accessible for a teen readership.
- **Brave Face** – Shaun David Hutchinson 2019  
Hutchinson explores growing up, sexual awakening and identity, and facing depression in this memoir covering his younger years. Surviving a suicide attempt, Hutchinson embarks on a journey of recovery and self-acceptance which he tells readers about with honesty and even humour.
- **Rethinking Normal: A Memoir in Transition** – Katie Rain Hill 2014  
This memoir tells the story of Katie Rain Hill's life up to the age of nineteen. Hill felt uncomfortable in her own skin and eventually came out as transgender. Upon meeting Arin Andrews, Hill's life became much more public than she ever thought it would. A funny and powerful autobiographical text for young adults.
- **Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen** – Arin Andrews 2014  
A companion memoir to *Rethinking Normal*, *Some Assembly Required* tells Andrews' side of the story. After coming out as transgender at a young age, and meeting Katie Rain Hill for the first time, his life took a turn he never expected. Funny, thought-provoking, and detailed, this memoir is a hit with many youth.
- **This Book is Gay** – Juno Dawson  
Juno Dawson, is a former teacher and also an author of young adult fiction. Dawson's book is an uncensored exploration of growing up within the LGBTQ spectrum, including personal testimonials, how-to guides, and topics ranging from sex and politics, to stereotypes, to coming out and dealing with family and peers.

## ***Other Recommended Online Book Lists***

[ALA Rainbow List](#) • [Two-Spirit & Indigiqueer Books](#) • [Welcoming Schools](#) • [YA Pride](#) • [I Dream Library](#)

This is not a comprehensive list of available resources, but a sample of materials that are acclaimed, timely, and varied in terms of representation—gender, sexuality, race, (dis)ability, religious affiliation, etc. This list of resources was compiled and annotated by Dr. Robert Bittner, a specialist in LGBTQ literature for children and youth. He has an MA in Children's Literature from UBC and a PhD in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies from SFU. For more information, you can visit his [website](#). Dr. Bittner can be contacted via email [r.bittner@rocketmail.com](mailto:r.bittner@rocketmail.com)

# SOGI Explained

The following information is provided to explain aspects of the curriculum related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) and how it is being discussed in the classroom. **It is important to note that there is no separate and distinct SOGI program or curriculum.**

The work being done is not unique - it is part of the Ministry of Education's mandated provincial curriculum in both public and private school systems. There is nothing overly new about this work and **a new subject area is not being introduced.** Teachers have been teaching this curriculum for years, but there is a legitimate need for increasing awareness of sexual orientation and gender identity to be as inclusive as possible. We hope this will clarify confusing and inconsistent messages being communicated by individuals and organizations not affiliated with our school district.

In July 2016, the provincial government amended the BC Human Rights Code to include gender expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination (sexual orientation was already included in the Code). Later that year, the Ministry of Education announced that explicit references to sexual orientations and gender identity must be included in all public and independent school districts' codes of conduct throughout the province. The Ministry of Education also recently implemented a redesigned curriculum, which provides educators the opportunity to teach in a more inclusive and personalized way. **It is important to note that curriculum is provincially mandated and adherence to the BC Human Rights Code is not optional for all schools and school districts.**

**School District 43 (Coquitlam) is ensuring that the diversity that already exists within our school communities is reflected in classroom lessons.** Sexual orientation and gender identity are topics that are present throughout several curriculum content areas, but mostly arise in the physical and health education (PHE), language arts, and social studies curricula among many other topics. The PHE curriculum also has topics related to nutrition, physical activity, maintaining positive mental health, sexual health, child abuse prevention and drug education. Sexual orientation and gender identity are also sometimes discussed as they arise in the daily lives of students, and in the "teachable moments" that occur daily in classrooms. **All this information is age and developmentally appropriate and coverage of curricular content is done very respectfully.**

To build a strong community, it is important for all students, families, and staff to be reflected in the curriculum and in school life, meaning that we are inclusive of all types of families (single parent, mixed culture, intergenerational, foster families, blended families, adopted, same sex families, etc.) and individuals (regardless of how they identify or what their sexual preferences might be). **It is about respecting all people and the diversity of our society.**

In addressing SOGI in the curriculum, teachers do not suggest students develop a particular set of beliefs around sexual orientation or gender identity. **The approach is to build understanding of the diverse society that we live in and learn to treat each other with dignity and respect, regardless of our differences.** Most school districts throughout the province are beginning to use the SOGI 123 resource, but other resources may also be used to meet curricular outcomes.

It is important to note that the Provincial Government has allowed for some flexibility in the delivery of certain 'sensitive areas' of the curriculum, specifically topics related to reproduction and sexuality that some students and their parents/guardians may feel more comfortable addressing by means other than instruction by a teacher in a regular classroom setting. In such instances, students, with their parents' or guardians' consent, may arrange to address topics related to reproduction and sexuality by an alternative means. This must be arranged in consultation with their school. The alternate means must be agreed upon by the students, their parents or guardians, and the school. The alternate delivery policy does not allow students to "opt-out" of learning about these topics. It is expected that students will, in consultation with their school, demonstrate their knowledge of the learning standard(s) or learning outcomes they have arranged to address by alternative means. These topics usually do not include lessons and topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity, unless they relate specifically to reproduction and sexuality.

We encourage you to read the information on this webpage, including our Frequently Asked Questions and the Physical & Health Education Curriculum Connections outlined below, and visit the webpages below:

- Physical & Health Education <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/physical-health-education>
- BC Government Media Release <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017EDUC0104-001810>
- BC Government SOGI Factsheet <https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi-in-schools>
- BC Government Media Release <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016EDUC0089-001625>
- BC's New Curriculum <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/>
- Videos:
  - <https://youtu.be/ZDSARFjk7X0>
  - <https://youtu.be/W5-BhcorOtl>

## SOGI in the Curriculum FAQs

### **What exactly is SOGI education?**

There is no separate and distinct SOGI program or curriculum. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) are important topics that are interwoven through several curriculum areas, most notably, Physical and Health Education, language arts, and social studies. How the topics are introduced to students is dependent on the age and stage of their development. These topics may also be discussed as they arise in the daily lives of students.

### **Are discussions about sex or sexual practices taking place in elementary classrooms?**

No, sexuality as a concept is discussed starting in grade 4 (with the onset of puberty) but does not include discussions about sexual acts or practices. Secondary students need accurate information about relationships and safe sex. Lack of information can have significant consequences for youth health and emotional wellbeing.

### **Are school aged children too young to be learning about gender?**

When discussing gender, the conversations are largely about what people like to wear, the activities they engage in and how they feel about themselves. Gender is about self-identity. When students learn about the diversity found in gender, they have an opportunity to explore a greater range of interests, ideas and activities.

### **Aren't elementary aged children too young to be talking about sexual orientation and gender identity? Why can't you just teach about bullying instead of talking about sexual orientation and gender identity?**

It's important that all students feel safe and welcomed in school. In order to do that, it's important that everyone has the opportunity to learn about each other and celebrate each other's differences. Unfortunately, children are already learning homophobic and transphobic slurs starting in the primary years. The job of educators is to make schools safe by opposing all bullying and name calling.

### **Won't talking about sexual orientation and gender identity confuse children/youth?**

Information and discussion will not make anyone gay or straight. No one decides to be gay or straight, it is not a "lifestyle choice". As students grow older, some will identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. All of our students need to feel safe, welcome and positively reflected in the curriculum.

### **Are students being told not to use "boy" or "girl" to describe themselves?**

No, students have never been told this. Teachers have been asked to think about using more inclusive strategies for grouping students or speaking collectively about a class. For example, instead of saying "good morning boys and girls" a teacher may use a phrase such as "good morning students". This allows for all students to feel included regardless of their gender identity.

### **Are students being told not to call their parents "mom" or "dad"?**

No, students have never been told this.

**Why is SD43 working on ensuring sexual orientation and gender identity are being taught in schools?**

The work that is being done in the district is the Ministry of Education's curriculum, it is not unique to SD43, it is province-wide. This work has been mandated in both public and private school systems. SD43 is merely ensuring that the diversity that exists in school is reflected in the conversations in the classroom – there has been no addition to the curriculum. There is nothing overly new about this, a new subject area is not being introduced. Teachers have been teaching this curriculum for years, but there is an increasing awareness to be inclusive. It is important that these conversations are respectful and inclusive.

**Can parents “opt-out” of education related to sexuality, sexual orientation and gender orientation?**

The Provincial Government has allowed for some flexibility in the delivery of certain 'sensitive areas' of the curriculum, specifically topics related to reproduction and sexuality that some students and their parents/guardians may feel more comfortable addressing by means other than instruction by a teacher in a regular classroom setting. These topics do not include lessons and topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity, unless they relate to reproduction and sexuality. [Read the Policy here.](#)

**I have concerns about what is being taught in my child's classroom. Who should I talk to?**

The best place to start is always with your child's teacher. As with all areas of the curriculum, the classroom teacher is the most knowledgeable about the subjects being taught in individual classes. The school-based administrator can also be an excellent source of information.



## **Sexual Orientation Gender Identity (SOGI) Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is SOGI 123?**

SOGI education is not a program, course, or curriculum. SOGI 123 identifies three steps school districts are required to take to ensure all students feel welcome and included in our schools. The first are changes to policies and procedures. The District has met this Ministry directive by changing our policies and district and school codes of conduct to include sexual orientation and gender identity in order to meet the changes to the BC Human Rights Code.

The second step is creating inclusive environments. The District has been working towards creating safe, inclusive, learning communities for years. There is no change in practice to staff's approach as the SOGI 123 resources are made available to teachers.

The third step is ensuring that sexual orientation and gender identity resources are included in the current curriculum when appropriate. The SOGI 123 lessons and resources are an addition to those that already exist in schools. Teachers have been using resources that reflect the diversity in our community within their curriculum for years in BC Schools. This practice continues in Central Okanagan Public Schools, whether teachers choose to use SOGI 123 resources or other approved resources.

Finally, SOGI education also informs and supports other work that students and teachers have done across the Central Okanagan district for years – including Alliance Clubs, Diversity Clubs, and events such as Harmony Day, which build acceptance for and the celebration of the diversity in our schools.

### **Why do you teach this topic to elementary students?**

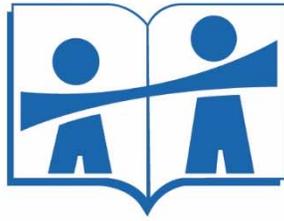
Whenever the topic of SOGI comes up at school, teachers introduce it according to the age and development of the students who are discussing it. The SOGI discussions reflect who makes up our community and promotes inclusive values.

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### **Is SOGI 123 going to require teachers to teach my child sexually explicit acts?**

The simple answer is no. SOGI 123 is NOT Sexual Health Education. Sexual Health Education is Ministry approved curriculum that is embedded in the Physical Health Education and taught by specialist teachers for the elementary, middle and secondary school students. The Sexual Health Education curriculum is age appropriate, and is taught with sensitivity and has a focus on healthy relationships.

The Sexual Health Education lessons begin in Grade 4 (as learners begin to experience puberty) but do not include discussions about sexual acts or practices at the elementary level. Teachers and students discuss more details of sexual practices at the secondary level because learners require information to support healthy relationships. Parents may opt to teach the outcomes of Sexual Health Education in a home program. Parents may NOT opt out of our students learning about who lives in our community and their protection under the Human Rights Act and the District Policy and Codes of Conduct.

### **Are elementary students still too young to learn about gender?**

Discussions about gender at a young age tend to focus on clothing, activities, and students' feelings about themselves. Gender is about self-identity, and learning about diversity in gender can help children feel safe to express themselves and share their ideas.

### **If you are worried about children feeling unsafe or excluded, why not just focus on bullying?**

Just as adults do, children tend to fear or dislike what they do not understand. Sadly, at a young age some children already learn to use homophobic and transphobic slurs against people who appear to be different. SOGI education builds respect and acceptance of diversity, so that every single child in Central Okanagan Public Schools feels safe and welcome.

### **What if you just confuse my child, or cause them to choose a homosexual lifestyle?**

Informing people about the experience of someone else will not make them gay or straight, since these are not choices. As children mature, they will self-identify on their own terms about whether they are gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, or transgender – no matter how they self-identify, it is important that they feel safe and positively reflected in what they learn.

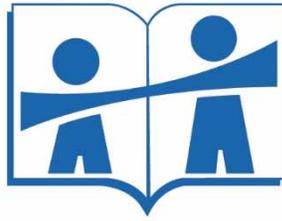
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**Why tell children to ignore clear biological distinctions? Why are you stopping kids from saying "boy" and "girl" or calling their parents "mom" and "dad"?**

Students will NOT be asked to stop using gender-specific pronouns. However, teachers should consider how they address groups of students to ensure that all students feel included in statements. It is as simple as saying, "Good Morning Grade 4's", instead of good morning boys and girls.

**Why is the public School District forcing this new agenda on our community?**

The work to incorporate SOGI education is part of a Ministry of Education's initiative, meaning it is provincial and not unique to the Central Okanagan. The Ministry of Education mandated both public and private school systems to ensure that conversations in the classroom reflect the diversity that exists in school. There is nothing especially new about SOGI education resources. Teachers have been teaching about diversity for years.

**With the introduction of SOGI 123, is the Board of Education going to have boys and girls use group washrooms together?**

No, there is no plan to have group gender-neutral washrooms. District sites and schools have both Male and Female group washrooms, and where possible, single use gender neutral washrooms. New building are being built with all three washroom types in schools. Single use washrooms are identified as "washroom" and do not use gender, handicap or any other specific identifier.

**Does the implementation of SOGI 123 interfere with parental rights and the protections under the Human Rights Code for religion?**

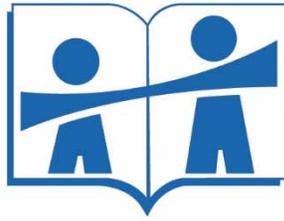
No, the District respects the diversity and the Human Rights Code that protects all individuals from discrimination. It will support and defend the inclusion of all persons it serves with the voice of legislation, policy and practices. Schools are to be safe, inclusive environments for all, free of discrimination. Public school districts are secular by legislation. Parents wishing to teach particular religious perspectives will need to do so at home. There is no provision within the School Act or SOGI 123 that prevents parents from exercising their rights as parents to raise their children and influence their growth and development with values and beliefs that are part of their religion or culture.

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The education of our communities children and youth is a community effort that involves parents/guardians, teachers, and the children and youth themselves, and their views and values. Many people in the community will have views that influence our children and youth. Some ideas will be in opposition of others. It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to have discussions at home that help form the values of the children/youth in their care. It is the District's responsibility to educate students using the filter of approved curricula or resources to meet the Ministry's goal of preparing the "Educated Citizen".

### **Why we will protect, respect and include all students?**

Students who experience discrimination, whether it is based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or culture have a legal and ethical right to be safe and protected in schools.

### **I think my child may be transgender. What should I do next?**

The Canadian Paediatric Society says:

*"There is nothing medically or psychologically wrong with your child. Gender diversity is not a result of illness or parenting style. It isn't caused by letting your son play with dolls, or your daughter play with trucks.*

*If your child is transgender or gender-creative, they can live a happy and healthy life. Get support from other parents of transgender and gender-creative children, or talk to a mental health professional who specializes in the care of transgender and gender-creative children (if available in your community). Indigenous families can talk to a two-spirit elder or leader."*

For further information, visit the Canadian Paediatric Society – Caring for Kids website at <https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/>.

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