More Than a Safe Space

How Schools Can Enable LGBTQ Students to Thrive

BY MICHAEL SADOWSKI

Few educators or philosophers of education would argue that schools' sole purpose is to keep children safe. Yet a particular subset of students in the United States—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ)* students—are often served by their schools as if their mere safety were a sufficient objective in and of itself.[1] The purpose of my book *Safe Is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students*, from which this article is drawn, is to challenge the all-too-prevalent attitudes and practices that suggest "safe" schools are enough for LGBTQ students, and to articulate what it might look like to take public schools in the United States to the next level in their service to LGBTQ students and their treatment of LGBTQ issues.

Fortunately, this vision need not emerge out of some utopian vision of the future. Today, right now, educators working in different parts of the country and in various capacities—as teachers, administrators, librarians, and counselors—realize aspects of this vision every day with their students. Their efforts illustrate not

Michael Sadowski teaches education at Bard College, is the director of the Bard Early College-Hudson Initiative, and is the editor of the Youth Development and Education Series for Harvard Education Press. A former high school teacher and Gay-Straight Alliance advisor, he has served as vice chair of the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth, editor of the Harvard Education Letter, *and a teacher trainer in New York City's public schools. This article is adapted with permission from his book* Safe Is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students *(Harvard Education Press, 2016), www.hepg.org/hep-home/books/safe-is-not-enough.*

*In discussions of the issues that affect LGBTQ students, language can be problematic. Before the 1990s, most studies about LGBTQ people referred only to lesbian (L) and gay (G) individuals, but researchers have become increasingly aware that bisexual (B) people are a distinct group with specific concerns. More recent research also has recognized the special issues that affect transgender (T) individuals, who do not conform to traditional man/woman or boy/girl gender norms in a variety of ways. In addition, some individuals identify as queer (Q), a designation that implies a rejection of societal norms and/or labels associated with sexuality and gender. The *Q* in LGBTQ is also used to designate "questioning" here, referring to students who are unsure of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

only that schools *should be* more than safe for LGBTQ students but that they *already are* in many respects, in a wide range of communities and contexts around the country, and that they therefore *can be* in many others.

A History of "Safe" Schools

Safety is, of course, a basic prerequisite for schooling—children and adolescents need to feel and be safe at school in order to learn. The language of safety has therefore been central to programming in support of LGBTQ students throughout its often-contentious history over the last three decades.

The universal belief in the need for students to be safe at school was key to the arguments educators and activists made in the 1980s and early 1990s, when efforts to improve schools for LGBTQ (or, as was the focus at the time, gay and lesbian) youth were in their early stages. As these education advocates urgently and accurately pointed out, gay and lesbian students were being verbally and physically harassed on a daily basis at school, did not feel safe, and were suffering a host of academic, health, and mental health consequences because of it—conditions that persist in many school environments to this day.

In 1989, Massachusetts was the first state to tackle the issues affecting LGBTQ youth in schools and communities by establishing what was then called the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth.[2] Although it was a tough sell in that era, even in relatively progressive Massachusetts, advocates succeeded at getting Republican Governor William Weld to issue an executive order starting the commission, primarily by highlighting the public health epidemic of gay and lesbian youth suicide. National statistics at the time showed that about a third of adolescent suicides were by gay and lesbian young people, a crisis advocates argued could be addressed through community- and school-based programs that made these environments safer for gay and lesbian students.[3]

Eventually, the commission's work led to the nation's first state-funded programs to benefit gay and lesbian youth, and policymakers made the language of safety prominent in these initial efforts. Massachusetts's school-based program, first founded in 1993, was and continues to be called the Safe Schools Program. (It began as the Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students, and the name was changed to the Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students in recent years.)

Outside Massachusetts, other educators and activists used similar language in establishing some of the earliest programs focused on the needs of LGBTQ youth. Washington state's Safe Schools Coalition expanded from a Seattle-based group to a state-level program in 1993 to serve as a resource to educators who wanted to improve school environments for LGBTQ students. The Washington coalition also provided (and continues to make available) research reports and other publications highlighting the issues affecting LGBTQ youth, which are used by educators, researchers, and advocates around the state and elsewhere.[4]

In another example in which advocates have expressed the needs of LGBTQ students in terms of safety, in 2003 the New York City Department of Education, in cooperation with the Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI), a social service agency dedicated to the needs of LGBTQ youth, expanded HMI's Harvey Milk High School (HMHS) into the first four-year school in the United States intended exclusively to serve LGBTQ students. Advocates for the school argued it would serve as a safe haven for young people who might not be or feel safe in other city schools. Although the school has had its detractors on both ends of the political spectrum—conservatives who disagree with the notion of public money used to fund a school exclusively for LGBTQ students, and progressives who believe such a school sanctions segregation—its supporters have prevailed largely on the grounds that LGBTQ students need a "safe space" in which to learn.[5]

As a description of the school on the Hetrick-Martin website still points out, it remains a necessary remedy to a less-than-ideal situation for LGBTQ students around the city: "In an ideal world, all students who are considered at risk would be safely integrated into all NYC public schools. But in the real world, at-risk students need a place like the Harvey Milk High School. HMHS is one of the many NYC small schools that provide safety, community, and high achievement for students not able to benefit from more traditional school environments."[6]

> # The "safe" paradigm has primarily centered on antibullying programs, LGBTQ "safe zones," and Gay-Straight Alliances.

What Does "Safe" Mean?

Although the efforts of educators and advocates to make schools safer for LGBTQ students have taken many forms in different kinds of communities, nationally the "safe" paradigm has primarily centered on three components: antibullying programs, LGBTQ "safe zones," and Gay-Straight Alliances. Some schools have one or two of these components in place, and many have all three. But even schools with the full triad may be operating under a tacit agreement that "safe" is an acceptable standard for meeting the

needs of their LGBTQ populations, when they can and should be doing much more.

Antibullying Programs

Largely in response to several high-profile cases of peer-to-peer harassment publicized in the national media, some of which were associated with the suicides of students who were victimized, new or expanded antibullying policies have been implemented at all levels of government in the last several years. Some of these cases have involved LGBTQ-based harassment, including that of a high school freshman from a suburb of Buffalo, New York, who according

Despite progress, unwelcoming school climates continue to take a toll on the well-being of LGBTQ students.

to news reports was relentlessly harassed with antigay epithets and committed suicide in September 2011. Before taking his own life, he posted on the blog website Tumblr, "I always say how bullied I am, but no one listens. What do I have to do so people will listen?"[7] (For more on bullying of LGBTQ students, see the article on page 24.)

From 2008 to 2012, 49 of the 50 states either introduced or expanded antibullying legislation, and although most of these policies do not address the bullying of LGBTQ students specifically, they are often cited as evidence that schools and government are taking the needs of LGBTQ students seriously. Many of these bills use the language of safety in their names, such as Iowa's antibullying and antiharassment law, also known as the Iowa Safe Schools Law, which protects students from bullying and harassment based on "any of the following traits or characteristics: age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, and familial status."[8] The United States Congress is currently considering the Safe Schools Improvement Act, a piece of antibullying legislation that would include specific protections for LGBTQ students.

GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network), a national education and advocacy group that promotes improved school environments for LGBTQ students, strongly advocates such "enumeration"—the explicit listing of factors for which students might be subject to harassment or assault—for all antibullying policies. As a GLSEN policy statement explains, enumeration strengthens a school's capacity to protect not only LGBTQ students but any others who might be targeted:

Enumeration is essential to protecting as many students as possible from bullying and harassment. The strength of an enumerated law or policy is that it underscores those students who research shows are most likely to be bullied and harassed and least likely to be protected under non-enumerated antibullying laws and policies. While enumerated policies specifically highlight the most vulnerable students, they do not limit the policy only to those students. All students are protected, even if they do not fall into one of the enumerated categories. Enumeration that includes sexual orientation and gender identity removes any doubt that LGBT youth are protected from bullying and harassment.[9]

With enumeration, as GLSEN suggests, there is no ambiguity about the fact that anti-LGBTQ harassment and bullying are unacceptable—regardless of any religious or political beliefs that a student, teacher, administrator, parent, or community member might hold—and that educators have a nonnegotiable responsibility to address it if it occurs. GLSEN's research has found that enumeration is associated with lower rates of victimization of LGBTQ students and a much higher incidence of teachers intervening when these students are targeted by their peers:

Enumeration provides teachers and school personnel with the tools they need to implement anti-bullying and harassment policies, making it easier for them to prevent bullying and intervene when incidents occur. Evidence shows that educators often do not recognize anti-LGBT bullying and harassment as unacceptable behavior. Sometimes they fail to respond to the problem due to prejudice or community pressure. When they can point to enumerated language that provides clear protection for LGBT students, they feel more comfortable enforcing the policy. Students in schools with enumerated policies reported that teachers intervene more than twice as often compared to students in schools with generic anti-bullying policies, and more than three times as often compared to students in schools with no policy at all.[10]

To the extent that antibullying programs and laws protect LGBTQ and other students from being taunted by their peers in school, online, or elsewhere, they clearly have contributed to important positive change. But some experts on gender- and

sexuality-based harassment in schools have questioned whether the focus on bullying prevention has overgeneralized the various kinds of bias, discrimination, and harassment that specific subgroups of students, such as LGBTQ youth, experience. As Nan Stein, senior research scientist at the Wellesley Centers for Women, has noted, "When schools put these new anti-bullying laws and policies into practice, the policies are often overly broad and arbitrary, … [and] sometimes egregious behaviors are framed by school personnel as bullying, when in fact they may constitute illegal sexual or gender harassment or even criminal hazing or assault."[11] Moreover, antibullying policies, if they represent the only action school administrators take to support LGBTQ students, can create a false impression that the full range of these students' needs is being met.

LGBTQ "Safe Zones"

Another way in which "safe" language is central to schools' efforts to improve climates for LGBTQ students is the designation within many school buildings of "safe zones," often indicated by stickers on the classroom or office doors of individual teachers, counselors, administrators, or staff members who choose to use them. These "safe zone" or "safe space" stickers, which first started appearing in the 1990s and of which there are many versions, serve an important symbolic function in that they announce to students without the need for any discussion that these educators are, in one way or another, LGBTQ-friendly. A safe zone sticker on an educator's door can imply any number of things: that they will challenge anti-LGBTQ language and harassment when it occurs; that they are open to the discussion of LGBTQ issues in the context of classwork or just in conversation; that they might be a safe person to whom an LGBTQ student could "come out"; and, in some cases, that the educator is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning.

From 2010 to 2013, GLSEN took the idea of safe zone stickers to the next level by sending a "safe space kit" to every public middle and high school in the United States. In addition to 10 safe zone stickers, the kit included safe space posters and GLSEN's "Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students," which offered strategies for supporting LGBTQ students and teaching about anti-LGBTQ harassment and violence.[12]

Several research studies, including GLSEN's biennial National School Climate Survey, which draws on the responses of roughly 7,900 students nationwide, have demonstrated that the safe space campaign, like enumerated antibullying policies, makes a tremendous difference in LGBTQ students' perceptions that their schools are safe and that their teachers are adults they can trust. Unfortunately, only about one-fourth (26 percent) of the students participating in the latest GLSEN survey said they had seen any safe zone stickers in their schools, but those who had reported significantly more positive attitudes toward their teachers and other school staff than their peers who had not. Whereas about half of GLSEN's survey participants who had not seen a safe zone sticker or poster had an adult at school with whom they felt comfortable talking about LGBTQ issues, nearly three-quarters of students who had seen the stickers had such an adult in their school.
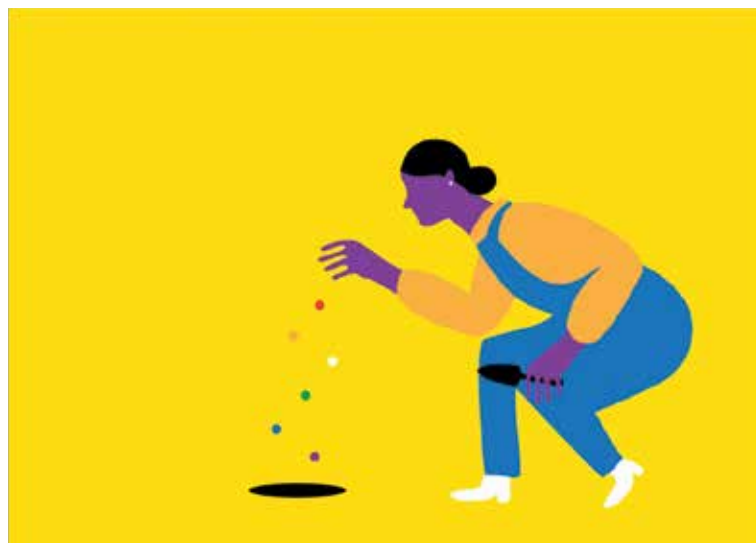
Gay-Straight Alliances

Finally, the notion of safe space has also been central to the emergence of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), extracurricular organizations in which LGBTQ young people and their allies support one another, plan educational programming for the school community about LGBTQ issues, and sometimes just "hang out" in an atmosphere where it is OK to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, or even straight. (For more on GSAs, see the article on page 10.)

Widely considered the precursor to the GSA movement in the United States, Project 10 in the Los Angeles Unified School District began in 1984 and continues today. Project 10 is a broad-based program that includes many components associated with the psychological and academic well-being of LGBTQ students, but one of its primary missions has always been to ensure "on-campus groups that are safe zones for LGBT students" in Los Angeles schools.[13]

GSAs proliferated around Massachusetts starting in the 1990s when the groundbreaking Safe Schools Program began providing seed money and educational and technical support to students and educators who wanted to start them. From the start, GSAs have been controversial in many of the communities in which they have been introduced, where conservative critics have argued that they raise issues pertaining to sexuality that are better left to families and religious communities. The teachers, administrators, and students who have started GSAs have often countered such criticism with the argument that their primary purpose is to provide much-needed "safe space" for LGBTQ students who might not otherwise feel safe in their schools.

Although far too many schools still do not have Gay-Straight Alliances, these groups have grown exponentially over the last decade. The latest National School Climate Survey, conducted by GLSEN in 2013, found that about half of students surveyed indicated there were GSAs in their schools, although another, more recent survey by GLSEN suggests a lower percentage, approximately one-third.[14] Many GSAs also register with GLSEN, and at last count the national organization had well over 4,000 such groups on its national roster. Whereas at one time GSAs were geographically concentrated in traditionally liberal bastions such as California, New York City, and the Boston area, now they can be found in schools in all 50 states. In many places, GSAs do in fact serve a crucial function as safe havens, offering to LGBTQ young people the

only place in their schools where they feel comfortable enough to talk openly and be themselves.

There is overwhelming evidence that Gay-Straight Alliances make a tremendous difference in the school lives of LGBTQ students. GLSEN's 2013 survey found that students who attend schools with GSAs are less likely to feel unsafe for reasons associated with their sexual orientation, are less likely to hear homophobic language regularly at school, report considerably higher levels of peer acceptance, and generally feel more connected to their school communities.[15] Another study associated GSAs with feelings of both personal and institutional "empowerment" for LGBTQ students—for example, feeling comfortable holding a same-sex girlfriend's or boyfriend's hand in the hallway or having the confidence to work toward change in school and government policies.[16]

It is an opportune time to create schools that affirm LGBTQ students and integrate respect for LGBTQ identities.

Like an antibullying program, however, the presence of a GSA, while essential, can also allow school officials who feel the pressures of competing priorities (such as raising test scores), or who fear controversy around LGBTQ-themed programming, to claim that the issue has been "covered" and therefore no further action is required. As long as LGBTQ students and their allies have a place to go once a week and a faculty advisor to talk to, school decision-makers may not see the need for these young people to be supported all day, every day, at school. They can fail to examine curriculum, athletics, extracurricular clubs, or other aspects of school life from which students may still feel excluded.

The Need for Safety First

Let me be very clear: "safe schools" policies and programs, enumerated antibullying initiatives, LGBTQ safe zone stickers and posters, and Gay-Straight Alliances all make a critical, lifesaving difference in the school experiences of LGBTQ students. Given LGBTQ youths' persistently disproportionate risk for harassment, feeling unsafe at school, substance abuse, and suicide, safety is a critical baseline from which all subsequent work must follow.[17] The educators and advocates who built the early successes of the LGBTQ student rights movement understood this. As a result, many schools are much, much safer places for LGBTQ students than they were 30, 20, even 10 years ago. And it has become clear to more and more people that those schools that still offer no basic protections or safe space to LGBTQ students need to change immediately.

Yet the notion of GSAs as a "safe space," or certain teachers' rooms as "safe zones," as well as the framing of initiatives to benefit LGBTQ students as "safe schools" programming, raises a number of crucial questions as educators and advocates look toward what must happen next to build on these successes. If a certain place in the school is designated as a safe space, what does that say about the rest of the building? If certain educators are seen as "safe" for students to talk to about issues that are central to their lives, what about the others? Does a school administration have a responsibility to ensure that LGBTQ students feel supported by *all* their teachers in *every* learning space in the building, not just treated with mere "tolerance" by the majority? Is safety the only thing to which LGBTQ students are entitled at school? What about the skills and knowledge they need to be effective, engaged members of their society *as LGBTQ youth*? Finally, are LGBTQ students a monolithic group with one basic common need: safety? What differences exist among various subgroups within the LGBTQ student population—boys and girls, transgender students, LGBTQ students of color—and the way they experience the school climate and programs? What would an optimal education for all these young people look like?

A Watershed Moment

While much remains to be done, our country is arguably at a watershed moment with regard to both LGBTQ rights and shifting public attitudes about LGBTQ issues. The right to marry for all couples, regardless of their sex, is now the law of the land in all 50 states. Perhaps even more significantly, the recent changes in marriage law have occurred with far less public outcry than would have been imaginable even 10 years ago. Although there are still conservative activists around the country working to overturn the Supreme Court's decision legalizing same-sex marriage and to challenge other LGBTQ rights—and these are more prevalent in some geographical areas than others—the chances that such challenges will ultimately succeed seem to be growing increasingly slim.

One of the reasons for this wave of policy change may be the dramatic shift in public attitudes about homosexuality and LGBTQ rights that has occurred in recent years. Whereas through the late 1980s only about a third of participants in Gallup's annual polls said they believed gay or lesbian relations between consenting adults

should be legal, that number rose to two-thirds by 2014. On the issue of same-sex marriage, the changes have been even more dramatic: as recently as 1996, only 27 percent of Americans said they believed marriages between same-sex couples should be recognized by law as valid, but 55 percent approved of their legal recognition by 2014 (and a 2015 CBS News poll prior to the Supreme Court's ruling found this number to be as high as 60 percent).[18]

Although popular media still depict heterosexuality and traditional expressions of gender as the norm, images of same-sex relationships and LGBTQ identities are now more common in mainstream popular culture than ever before. And while LGBTQ people of color and transgender people are still sparsely represented in the media, they are certainly more visible than they were a decade or two ago (the celebrity of openly gay black NFL player Michael Sam and the Amazon web series *Transparent* being two such examples). Moreover, the wide availability of information and resources about LGBTQ issues and identities online has contributed further to the emergence of a new age that might have seemed unimaginable even 20 years ago.

Within this larger cultural context in which attitudes about LGBTQ people and identities have shifted so favorably and so quickly, progress has also been made on the school front, but much more slowly and inconsistently. GLSEN's latest National School Climate Survey showed that significantly fewer students hear homophobic remarks "frequently" or "often" in their schools than students did at the beginning of the century, but this was still a problem for about two-thirds of the students polled. The percentage of students reporting representation of LGBTQ people and issues in their school curricula also was higher than ever in the latest survey; nevertheless, four out of five students still said there was no positive representation of LGBTQ people or issues in any of their classes, and less than half (44 percent) said they had access to LGBTQ-related information in their school library.[19]

Despite the progress that's been made, unwelcoming school climates continue to take a toll on the physical, emotional, and academic well-being of LGBTQ students. Nearly one-third of the students in the 2013 GLSEN survey said they had missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, and one in 10 missed four or more days. LGBTQ students who had experienced high levels of victimization were significantly more likely than other LGBTQ youth to miss school because of feeling unsafe, have lower grade point averages, plan not to go to college, and suffer from depression and low self-esteem.[20]

Finally, progress on LGBTQ issues seems to have come further for some students than others, depending on geography and on their specific identities under the LGBTQ umbrella. Students in the South and Midwest regions of the United States reported the highest levels of harassment, perceived lack of safety, and anti-LGBTQ language in their schools on the 2013 survey, and they were the least likely to report access to GSAs, LGBTQ-inclusive curricula, and teachers they felt they could talk to about LGBTQ issues.[21] (In 2015, 57 percent of students from the Northeast responding to a GLSEN survey said their schools had GSAs, whereas only 37 percent of students in the South said so.)[22] Moreover, transgender students in the 2013 survey reported the highest levels of harassment and the lowest levels of perceived safety among all participating students, and transgender identities tend to be the least represented in curricula, library resources, and other school materials and programs.[23]

This larger context of progress in some, but not all, aspects of society and of schooling has led me to the following conclusions: (1) Safety is an essential baseline for schools' ability to meet the needs of LGBTQ students effectively and has served as a critical foundation for efforts to introduce policies and programs at all levels of government to benefit LGBTQ students, *but it is not a sufficient goal in itself.* (2) Considerable progress has been made in recent decades on LGBTQ issues in schools, but inconsistencies with regard to geographical location, identity categories within the LGBTQ spectrum, and other factors have created *inequities that are unacceptable.* (3) Recent political progress and shifts in public attitudes about LGBTQ issues suggest it is an opportune time for educators and policymakers to move beyond "safe" and create schools that *affirm LGBTQ students and integrate respect for LGBTQ identities through multiple aspects of school life.*

Despite all the gains of the safe schools movement and the tremendous difference this work has made, about one in four LGBTQ youth still attempts suicide at some point during adolescence.[24] Only one in five has the opportunity to study LGBTQ issues at school, and more than half experience harassment based on their gender identity or sexual orientation.[25] These statistics were even worse 20 years ago, but even if conditions have improved, clearly they haven't improved enough. And, on some fronts and in some schools, they seem hardly to have improved at all.

Arguing for all students to be safe at school was the right strategy in the political climate of the late 20th century, when LGBTQ individuals—both in law and in public opinion—were viewed as less worthy of rights than their straight counterparts. Although we may still be a long way from full LGBTQ inclusion in American society, there are hopeful signs that the current generation of LGBTQ youth can grow up in a different world, where instead of being silenced they will have many opportunities to be leaders.

We can hear such a future in the words of the openly LGBTQ students at Brooklyn's Academy for Young Writers, who are inspiring younger students to join GSAs and be proud of their identities.

More Than a Safe Space

(Continued from page 9)

We also can hear it in the voices of the students in Nixa, Missouri, and Park City, Utah, who are meeting with elected officials in their state capitals and advocating for change. The educators who support these students are fostering qualities such as self-efficacy, empowerment, and pride among their LGBTQ students, and the fact that some are doing it in the face of intense political and religious opposition makes clear that achieving to a standard beyond "safe" is possible anywhere. ☐

Endnotes

1. Many writers and advocates also include the letter *I* to refer to intersex individuals—people born with sexual characteristics that would be considered both male and female in the binary paradigm. Intersex rights advocates have called for change in the medical community to end practices aimed at "normalizing" children at birth to conform to one sex or another. Because none of the school programs I profile here address this issue discretely, I do not include this letter in the abbreviation.

2. This organization is now known as the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth.

3. Michael Sadowski, "Creating Safer Schools: The Beginning of Gay and Lesbian Student Rights in Massachusetts" (unpublished paper, Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth, 2002).

4. For a description of the Safe Schools Coalition and links to its research publications, visit www.safeschoolscoalition.org.

5. John Colapinto, "The Harvey Milk School Has No Right to Exist. Discuss," *New York*, February 7, 2005.

6. "The Harvey Milk High School: Education for the Real World," Hetrick-Martin Institute, accessed August 25, 2016, www.hmi.org/hmhs.

7. Dean Praetorius, "Jamey Rodemeyer, 14-Year-Old Boy, Commits Suicide After Gay Bullying, Parents Carry On Message," *Huffington Post*, September 20, 2011, www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/20/jamey-rodemeyer-suicide-gay-bullying_n_972023.html.

8. Carol Greta, "Safe Schools Law Explained," Iowa Safe Schools, accessed August 25, 2016, www.iowasafeschools.org/index.php/safe-schools-law.

9. GLSEN, "Enumeration," accessed August 25, 2016, www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Enumeration_0.pdf.

10. GLSEN, "Enumeration."

11. Nan Stein, "Bullying or Sexual Harassment? The Missing Discourse of Rights in an Era of Zero Tolerance," *Arizona Law Review* 45 (2003): 789.

12. "GLSEN's Safe Space Kit: Be an Ally to LGBT Youth!," GLSEN, accessed August 25, 2016, www.glsen.org/safespace.

13. "Project 10—Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Students Support," Los Angeles Unified School District, accessed August 25, 2016, http://notebook.lausd.net/portal/page?_pageid=33,1159973&_dad=ptl&_schema=PTL_EP.

14. Joseph G. Kosciw, Emily A. Greytak, Neal A. Palmer, and Madelyn J. Boesen, *The 2013 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools* (New York: GLSEN, 2014); and Emily A. Greytak, Joseph G. Kosciw, Christian Villenas, and Noreen M. Giga, *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited; A Survey of U.S. Secondary Schools and Teachers* (New York: GLSEN, 2016), 35.

15. Kosciw et al., *2013 National School Climate Survey*.

16. Stephen T. Russell, Anna Muraco, Aarti Subramaniam, and Carolyn Laub, "Youth Empowerment and High School Gay-Straight Alliances," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 38 (2009): 891–903.

17. Massachusetts was one of the first states to track youth risk behaviors by sexual orientation and arguably has the most comprehensive data on the risk behaviors of LGBTQ adolescents and how patterns have changed and/or remained consistent over the last two decades. See Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "Massachusetts High School Students and Sexual Orientation: Results of the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey" (Malden, MA: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013), www.mass.gov/cgly/YRBS13_FactsheetUpdated.pdf.

18. "Gay and Lesbian Rights," Gallup, accessed August 25, 2016, www.gallup.com/poll/1651/gay-lesbian-rights.aspx.

19. Kosciw et al., *2013 National School Climate Survey*.

20. Kosciw et al., *2013 National School Climate Survey*.

21. Kosciw et al., *2013 National School Climate Survey*.

22. Greytak et al., *From Teasing to Torment*, 36.

23. Kosciw et al., *2013 National School Climate Survey*.

24. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "Massachusetts High School Students and Sexual Orientation."

25. Kosciw et al., *2013 National School Climate Survey*; and Greytak et al., *From Teasing to Torment*.

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK