

# Rubric for the Evaluation of High Schools on their LGBTQ+ Inclusivity

From <https://edspace.american.edu/lgbtqinclusivesexeducation/>

	Non-existent/ dangerous (0)	Needs Improvement (1)	Fair (2)	Strong (3)	Excellent (4)	Tally
Bathrooms	Students are not allowed in bathrooms that correspond with their respective gender identity and are forced to use bathrooms that correspond to their biological sex.	Students are not allowed in bathrooms that correspond with their respective gender identity. Students are allowed to use single stall gender neutral bathrooms or staff bathrooms if they request it.	Students are allowed in the bathroom that corresponds with their respective gender identity regardless of biological sex, but they need explicit permission to do so.	Students are allowed in the bathroom that corresponds with their respective gender identity regardless of biological sex. Students are allowed to use single stall gender neutral bathrooms.	Students are allowed and <b>feel safe</b> in the bathroom that corresponds with their respective gender identity regardless of biological sex and without separate permission. There are gender neutral bathrooms available and easily accessible to all students.	
Locker rooms	Students are not allowed in locker rooms that correspond with their respective gender identity and are forced to use locker rooms that correspond to	Students are not allowed in locker rooms that correspond with their respective gender identity. Students are allowed to use single stall	Students are allowed in the locker room that corresponds with their respective gender identity regardless of biological sex, but they need explicit	Students are allowed in the locker room that corresponds with their respective gender identity regardless of biological sex. Students are	Students are allowed and <b>feel safe</b> in the locker room that corresponds with their respective gender identity regardless of biological sex.	

	their biological sex.	changing rooms if they request it.	permission to do so.	allowed to use single stall changing rooms.	There are gender neutral changing rooms available and easily accessible to all students.	
Bullying/harassment policies	The school has instituted harmful bullying and harassment policies for LGBTQ+ students (i.e. LGBTQ+ students have no path forward to get support from administration after bullying based on perceived or actual sexuality and gender identity)	The school has instituted no bullying and harassment policies for LGBTQ+ students (i.e. existing policies do not explicitly mention LGBTQ+ students).	The school has instituted weak bullying and harassment policies for LGBTQ+ students (i.e. enumerate protections for students harassed based on perceived or actual sexuality and gender identity)	The school has instituted inclusive bullying and harassment policies for LGBTQ+ students (i.e. work to ensure that protections are easily accessible to students and well communicated)	The school has instituted inclusive and explicit bullying and harassment policies for LGBTQ+ students and enforces these policies (i.e. explains what hate crimes are and the consequences; clear accountability measures and facilitating implementation in schools. Schools demonstrate an active response to the needs of the student body.	
Anti-discrimination policies	The school has instituted harmful anti-discrimination policies for LGBTQ+ students (i.e. LGBTQ+	The school has instituted no anti-discrimination policies for LGBTQ+ students (i.e. existing	The school has instituted weak anti-discrimination policies for LGBTQ+ students (i.e. enumerate	The school has instituted inclusive anti-discrimination policies for LGBTQ+ students (i.e. work to	The school has instituted inclusive anti-discrimination policies for LGBTQ+ students and enforces these	

	students have no path forward to get support from administration after discrimination based on perceived or actual sexuality and gender identity)	policies do not mention LGBTQ+ students).	protections for students harassed based on perceived or actual sexuality and gender identity)	ensure that protections are easily accessible to students and well communicated)	policies (i.e. clear accountability measures and facilitating implementation in schools that show need by increasing funding and resources)	
Transitioning student policies	Students are not allowed to change their legal name and gender listed on all school records. School faculty alerts parents or guardians when a student expresses a desire to express their gender identity.	There are no explicit policies on whether students are or are not allowed to change their legal name and gender listed on all school records. Therefore, it is taken on a case by case basis.	Students are allowed to change their legal name and gender listed on all school records. Parental permission is required to do so.	Students are allowed to change their legal name and gender listed on all school records. Parental permission is not required, but the information will not be kept confidential at the student's request.	Students can easily change their name and gender listed on all school records without parental permission and can request that parents not be informed of any transition at school. Any changes are completed in a timely manner.	
Athletics	Trans athletes are not allowed to play on sports teams. LGBTQ+ athletes are threatened or harassed by their teammates and	Trans athletes are forced to play on teams that match their sex assigned at birth. LGBTQ+ athletes do not feel welcome or	There are no policies in place on how trans athletes will be placed, so teams are determined on a case by case basis.	Trans athletes are allowed to play on teams that match their gender if they have physically transitioned (i.e. surgery, hormones, etc.).	Trans athletes are allowed to play on teams that match their gender, regardless of physical transition (i.e. surgery, hormones, etc.).	

	coaches.	supported by their teammates and coaches.	LGBTQ+ athletes feel somewhat welcomed and supported by their coaches and teammates.	LGBTQ+ athletes feel welcome and supported by their teammates and coaches.	LGBTQ+ athletes feel welcome and supported by their teammates and coaches, and there are policies in place to protect them from harassment and bullying.	
Inclusive language in policies	Policies are written with the intent to exclude or obstruct non-heterosexual and non-cisgender students, parents, and faculty.	Policies assume that students, parents, and faculty are heterosexual and cisgender while writing policies and therefore do not use LGBTQ+ inclusive language.	Policies do not assume that students, parents, and faculty are heterosexual and cisgender. However, policies do not use LGBTQ+ inclusive language.	Some policies have been evaluated and changed if necessary, to be non-gender normative. Some policies and rules are written using LGBTQ+ inclusive and gender neutral language.	Policies have been evaluated and changed when necessary to be non-gender normative. All policies and rules are written using LGBTQ+ inclusive and gender neutral language.	
Representation in curriculum	Some LGBTQ+ people/characters are discussed in history, literature, health classes, etc. However, they are stereotyped or villainized.	No LGBTQ+ people/characters are discussed in history, literature, health classes, etc.	Some LGBTQ+ people/characters are discussed in history, literature, health classes, etc. and are discussed in a normative way.	Some LGBTQ+ people/characters are discussed in a positive way in history, literature, health classes, etc.	Many LGBTQ+ people/characters are discussed in a positive way in history, literature, health classes, etc. There are also discussions of LGBTQ+ subtext in literary works.	

Knowledge of LGBTQ+ rights/laws	Students have no knowledge of what LGBTQ+ rights/laws exist internationally, nationally, and in their own state.	Students have limited knowledge of what LGBTQ+ rights/laws exist internationally, nationally, and in their own state.	Students understand what LGBTQ+ rights/laws exist internationally, nationally, and in their own state.	Students have a comprehensive understanding of what LGBTQ+ rights/laws exist internationally, nationally, and in their own state.	Students have a comprehensive understanding of what LGBTQ+ rights/laws exist internationally, nationally, and in their own state. They are also able to make an argument about whether they agree or disagree with these laws.	
Sex education	No sex-education is given to students of any grade level.	Abstinence-only sex-education is given to high schoolers.	Sex-education is given to high schoolers briefly with no requirements to be medically accurate. Abstinence is prioritized.	Sex-education is given to middle and high schoolers and is required to be medically accurate.	Sex-education begins as soon as possible, is medically accurate, comprehensive and positively inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals.	
Understanding of consent	Students do not know the definition of consent, or they know an incorrect/misleading definition.	Students know “yes means yes” and “no means no.”	Students can explain what consent is.	Students can explain what consent is and know that it must include a clear, enthusiastic “yes” that is not coerced or under the influence.	Students can <b>clearly articulate</b> what consent is and that it must include a clear, enthusiastic “yes” that is not coerced or under the influence. Students are aware	

					that consent is important in non-heterosexual relationships as well.	
Know the difference between sex and gender	Students do not believe that there is a difference between sex, gender, and gender expression.	Students do not know the definition or difference between sex, gender, and gender expression.	Students understand that sex and gender are different.	Students can distinguish between sex, gender, and gender expression.	Students can <b>clearly articulate</b> the difference between sex, gender, and gender expression.	
Knowledge of different definitions of gender identities and sexual orientations	Students do not believe that there are gender identities and sexual orientations outside of heterosexual and cisgender.	Students have limited knowledge about or are unaware about different definitions of gender identities and sexual orientations	Students understand that there are different gender identities and sexual orientations.	Students can explain some different definitions of gender identities and sexual orientations (i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender).	Students can <b>clearly articulate</b> many different definitions of gender identities and sexual orientations.	
Understanding of STIs and HIV	Students have no knowledge about what STIs and HIV/AIDs are, or they have incorrect/ misleading information.	Students are aware of what STIs and HIV/AIDs are and how they are contracted, but any discussion of this is heavily stigmatized.	Students understand what STIs and HIV/AIDs are in medically accurate terms.	Students can explain what STIs and HIV/AIDs are, how they are contracted, how to prevent them and what the treatments are.	Students can <b>clearly articulate</b> what STIs and HIV/AIDs are, how they are contracted, how to prevent them, what the treatments are, and what the stigmas	

					against them are.	
Knowledge of healthy relationships	Students have an incorrect/ misleading idea of what healthy relationships look like.	Students have limited knowledge of what healthy relationships look like.	Students understand what healthy relationships look like.	Students understand what healthy relationships look like and what resources are available if they are ever in an unhealthy relationship.	Students understand what healthy relationships look like, <b>even in non-heterosexual relationships</b> , and what resources are available if they are ever in an unhealthy relationship.	
Domestic/dating violence	No information is given about domestic/dating violence. No resources are available.	No information is given about domestic/dating violence. Resources are available but not publicly advertised.	Students know what domestic and dating violence is and how to identify it. Resources are available but not publicly advertised.	Students understand the dynamics of domestic violence. They are aware of the resources available in or out of school to help victims of any such violence.	Students understand the dynamics of domestic violence <b>even in non-heterosexual relationships</b> . They are aware of the resources available in or out of school to help victims of any such violence.	
Support resources from students	The majority of students are openly hostile towards LGBTQ+ students.	The majority of students will not share opinions or beliefs of LGBTQ+ students.	Students have no training, but most are publicly accepting of LGBTQ+	Students are not formally trained, but they are self-organized to support LGBTQ+	Students are trained and educated on how to be accepting of, inclusive towards,	

			students.	students (i.e. through a GSA or other student organizations).	and assist their LGBTQ+ peers.	
Support resources from adults	The majority of teachers and counselors show hostility that makes students uncomfortable in any way towards LGBTQ+ students.	The majority of teachers and counselors will not share opinions or beliefs of LGBTQ+ students.	Teachers and counselors have no training, but most are publicly accepting of LGBTQ+ students.	Counselors are trained on how to be accepting of, inclusive towards, and assist LGBTQ+ students.	<b>Counselors and teachers</b> are trained and educated on how to be accepting of, inclusive towards, and assist LGBTQ+ students and faculty.	
Knowledge of outside resources	No information is given about outside resources to support the physical or mental health of LGBTQ+ students.	Teachers and counselors are equipped with knowledge of what outside resources are available to support the physical or mental health of LGBTQ+ students.	If an LGBTQ+ student behaves in a way that shows they need support, outside resources to support their physical or mental health are provided.	<b>Teachers, counselors, other staff and students</b> are provided knowledge of what outside resources are available to support the physical or mental health of LGBTQ+ students.	Teachers, counselors, other staff and students are provided <b>knowledge of and access to outside resources</b> are available to support the physical or mental health of LGBTQ+ students.	
Outing students	Schools have explicit policy regarding outing students to parents or guardians. Or	Faculty discuss students' sexual orientation with parents or guardians regardless of intent	Schools do not require parental permission for students to attend events (proms, catillions, etc.)	explicit policy forbidding outing students to other staff, students, parents or guardians and it is	Schools have explicit policy forbidding outing students to other staff, students, parents or	



	outing students is considered normal behavior, if not explicit policy.	to out a student.	with a same-sex partner or permission to use the bathroom of their choice that corresponds with their gender identity.	actively enforced.	guardians and it is actively enforced. Additionally, staff is counseled on how to properly handle classroom issues regarding students coming out.	
Total						

## Score Evaluation:

### 0-17: Dangerous.

Schools in this zone need drastic change and improvement and are not providing a safe environment for LGBTQ+ students, in fact those students may be at risk. Sex-ed/health curriculum in these schools will also put all students at risk of contracting STIs and teen pregnancy. Schools in this section are recommended to change their policies to be more in line with what is suggested by this rubric.

### 18-34: Poor.

These schools may have made some attempt at protecting LGBTQ+ students, but it is minimal, and students are still unsafe and may be at risk. These schools may have some sort of sex-ed/health program but it is not comprehensive or inclusive putting all students at risk. Schools in this zone are recommended to change their policies to fit better with what is recommended by this rubric.

### 35-51: Needs Improvement.

Schools in this zone have taken positive steps to protect LGBTQ+ students however these students may still face unnecessary challenges. Sex-ed/health curriculum in these schools may not be fully comprehensive or inclusive. Schools should implement changes based on the rubric.

### 52-68: Strong.

These schools are doing an excellent job at ensuring the comfort and safety of LGBTQ+ students. Their sex-ed/health curriculum is very comprehensive and inclusive which ensures the safety and wellbeing of all students. Of course, there is always room for improvement and these schools should continue to look for ways they might better support their students.

## **Resources**

Want professional help revamping your school's policies and teacher trainings? Check out these resources:

- <https://www.glsen.org/educate/resources>
- <https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/education-teaching-degree/lgbtq-youth/>
- <http://www.welcomingschools.org/training/>
- <https://www.adl.org/who-we-are/our-organization/signature-programs/a-world-of-difference-institute/classroom>
  - This resource is more generally anti-bias training but is still incredibly valuable.

Our sex ed curriculum on this website is comprehensive and meets the requirements on the rubric for sex ed. It is free and available for any school to use or adapt. Other curricula that meet the requirements:

- Positive Prevention Plus
  - <https://www.positivepreventionplus.com/>
- Health Connected
  - <https://www.health-connected.org/curriculum>

Other resources used to help complete this rubric:

- [https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20-%20From%20Statehouse%20to%20Schoolhouse%202015\\_0.pdf](https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20-%20From%20Statehouse%20to%20Schoolhouse%202015_0.pdf)
- <https://siecus.org/resources/national-sexuality-education-standards/>

## **Research**

Unfortunately, there are many problems that affect members of the LGBTQ+ community, but more specifically the younger members of that community. In schools and education systems, a lack of representation and teaching for LGBTQ+ students can relate to mental and physical health-related repercussions.

LGBTQ+ students have been found to be more likely to be depressed, self-harming, suicidal, or idealizing suicide than their heterosexual/cisgender peers. In a study of 1000 students it was reported that students who claimed to have experienced discrimination for being LGBTQ+ “were significantly more likely than those who did not to report self-harm (25.0% vs. 6.3%) and suicidal ideation (23.9% vs. 7.4%). Additionally, they had significantly higher mean scores on the depressive symptomatology scale” (Almeida et al. 1008). Queer youth are shown to have significantly higher rates of suicide than both LGBTQ+ adults and heterosexual, cisgender youth and adults. “gay youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than other young people and may constitute up to 30 percent of all completed youth suicides annually” (Califia 161). This is attributed to being part of two groups with high suicide rates: LGBTQ+ people and young people. To be clear LGBTQ+ are not genetically predisposed to being depressed, “the thinking among most mental health professionals is that despair, hopelessness, and self-hatred are an understandable response to living in a society where LGBT people face stigma, discrimination, and violence” (Califia 161).

Bullying also greatly impacts LGBTQ+ students and it is incredibly prevalent in schools. Bullying towards LGBTQ+ students and a lack of awareness of related issues leads to an increase in risks (Russell 7). For example, the chance of LGBTQ+ students to reach negative outcomes such as suicide, depression, and drug abuse is higher than students that don't identify with this community. Schools that have anti-bullying policies protecting LGBTQ+ students have lower rates of depression and the students report feeling safer. Implementing such policies can prevent some of the risks. Additionally, changes in school policy and education focused on LGBTQ+ students can reduce the risk of negative outcomes in LGBTQ+ youths' lives (Russell 14). LGBTQ+ issues have been addressed in some schools through the use of school policy and education. Establishing an anti-bullying policy, and providing both faculty and staff training to address the problems LGBTQ+ students face is highly beneficial.

By looking at the evidence found and the history of LGBTQ+ discrimination in schools, one is able to see how relevant and imperative it is to confront this problem. It is incredibly important that schools change their policies for the better in order to insure the safety of all their students. Our rubric seeks to help in evaluating schools on their efforts or lack thereof in supporting and protecting LGBTQ+ students

## Works Cited

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