**Facts and Figures on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues in Schools**

**The Problem**

**Bullying and Harassment Are Serious Problems in Illinois Schools**
- 35% of Illinois students report that sexual orientation is the most common reason students are bullied or harassed.
- 34% of Illinois students report that gender identity is the most common reason students are bullied or harassed.

**Homophobic Language Is Pervasive in Illinois Schools**
- 74% of Illinois students report hearing homophobic remarks such as “faggot” or “dyke” from other students in school.
- 83% of Illinois students report hearing homophobic remarks such as “that’s so gay” from other students in school.

**Illinois Teachers and School Staff Do Not Intervene to Stop Homophobic Language**
- 48% of Illinois students report that teachers and school staff rarely intervene when they hear homophobic language.

**Homophobic Bullying and Harassment Affects Everyone**
- For each LGBT student who reports being bullied or harassed, 4 straight students report being harassed or bullied for being perceived as gay or lesbian.

**The Consequences**

**Missing School as a Result of Feeling Unsafe**
- LGB students are three times more likely than their heterosexual peers to miss school because they feel unsafe.

**Fighting That Requires Medical Attention**
- LGB students are nearly four times more likely than their heterosexual peers to be in a physical fight that requires medical attention.

**Depression**
- LGB students are nearly twice as likely as their heterosexual peers to suffer from depression.

**Attempting Suicide**
- LGB students are nearly three times more likely than their heterosexual peers to attempt suicide.

**Unchecked Bullying Leads to More Violence**
- 60% of boys classified as bullies in grades 6–9 were convicted of at least one crime by age 24 and 40% of them had three or more convictions.

**The Solutions**

**School Policies Inclusive of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**
- The frequency of homophobic remarks and harassment about nontraditional gender expression is greater at schools without comprehensive anti-harassment policies.

**Professional Development on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**
- Training teachers on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity is the single most effective strategy for creating a safer school climate.

**Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs)**
- Students in schools with GSAs or similarly supportive clubs report that teachers and school staff intervene more often to stop homophobic language than students in schools without such clubs.

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5. Szalacha, American Journal of Education.