



COMMUNITY UPLIFT
PROGRAM

North Dakota LGBTQ+ School Climate Report

A Step Towards Ending Queer Youth Suicide

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Preface: Letter from Author

Hello,

My name is Faye Seidler and I was born in Fargo, North Dakota. This state is my home and when I was younger I saw most of it while going on hunting or fishing trips to the backdrop of endless corn fields, cow pastures, and cheap motels. The Fargo-Moorhead area is where I've spent most of my life and where I intend to grow old. My grandma lived in Grand Forks and I remember going with my family to evacuate her during the 1997 flood. It was a time I saw a lot of our state coming together and helping one another survive.

As a kid growing up in this state I struggled because of my gender identity, because of my sexual orientation, and because of bullying: and as a teenager I sincerely believed that I had no hope to be happy. I constantly thought about taking my own life and never for a second imagined I had a future or would live beyond my teen years. I barely survived my youth and wouldn't be here today if not for the right people being in my life at the right time. Looking at the data on outcomes for queer youth in this state, it looks like many of them are going through exactly what I did: That many still grow up feeling like they don't belong and they can never be happy or have a future. I never want any youth to feel that, ever.

I want the youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or anything else to be able to find support, be happy, and dream for a better tomorrow. I want all youth to be able to explore what makes sense to them, regardless of how they end up identifying, without their parents beating them or kicking them out. The data suggest that these youth have disproportionately worse outcomes when it comes to suicidality, mental health, homelessness, and bullying.

The good news is that there are also tools to mitigate this, ways to support these youths, and opportunities to find better outcomes. This report isn't about identifying a problem. We've already done that. This report is about offering solutions to these problems that we know exist.

As a North Dakotan, I understand this state has significant cultural and religious barriers to helping our queer population. Growing up here, I said some awful things about the queer community and it took me a long time to understand and accept myself because of this. I questioned and researched science, biology, faith, and everything you could imagine in a decade-long journey, before coming to terms with who I was. It wasn't until I was able to be myself that I was able to be happy.

This report is from a woman who grew up here, who sees our LGBTQ+ youth drowning in a flood of misinformation, hostility, and hatred; and wants our state to come together to save this community, as we did in Grand Forks over two decades ago. I want to believe we can put aside all of our differences and work to make sure these kids have a future.

Faye Seidler

Executive Summary

Basic Terminology

- **Cisgender** - Someone whose sex assigned at birth matches their gender identity.
- **Transgender**- Someone whose sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity.
- **Straight/Heterosexual** - Someone who is attracted to members of the opposite gender.
- **Gay/Lesbian** - Someone who is attracted to members of the same gender.
- **Bisexual** - Someone who is attracted to more than one gender.
- **LGBTQ+** - An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer - with the plus representing the many unnamed identity labels that make up this community.
- **Queer** - An Umbrella Term that covers all identities that are not cisgender or straight. While this term has been used as a derogatory term in the past, it has been reclaimed for decades. “LGBTQ+” and “Queer” are used interchangeably in this report to refer to individuals who are marginalized due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. More and more youth are using the term queer to self-identity and this report honors this.

ND Key Data Points for Queer Youth

- **Suicide**
 - 61.6% Seriously consider attempting suicide
 - 48.5% Made a plan to attempt suicide
 - 33.3% Attempted suicide
- **Mental Health**
 - 84.6% Do not turn to adult when feeling sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious
 - 26.7% Have no idea who to talk to when experiencing distress
 - 51.7% Can identify one adult to talk to if they have a problem
 - 61.1% Reported bad mental health for one week or more each month.
- **Bullying**
 - 45.6% Experience electronic bullying
 - 59.6% Experience bullying on school property
 - 8.7% Straight students bullied due to perception they were LGBTQ+
- **Sexual Health**
 - 21.3% Have had sexual thing done to them they did not want
 - 9.8% Texted, e-mailed, or posted electronically a revealing or sexual photo
 - 13.4% Have had sex

ND Comparative Data Between Queer and Straight Youth

- **Suicide - Queer Youth Are:**
 - 222% More likely to consider attempting suicide
 - 270% More likely to plan suicide attempt
 - 354% More likely to attempt suicide
- **Mental Health - Queer Youth Are:**

- 22.0% More likely to not turn to adult to turn to when feeling distress
 - 37.8% More likely to have no idea who to talk to when experiencing distress
 - 21.4% More likely to not be able to identify one adult to talk to if they have a problem
 - 192% More likely to report bad mental health for one week or more each month.
- Bullying - Queer Youth Are:
 - 100% More likely to experience electronic bullying
 - 58% More likely to experience bullying on school property
 - 385% More likely to experience bullying for queer identity
- Sexual Health - Queer Youth Are:
 - 204% More likely to experience sexual things done to them they did not want
 - 197% More likely to have sent electronically a revealing or sexual photo
 - 163% More likely to have had sex

All data is from the ND YRBS Survey. No data found here were significantly different from YRBS national data. Comparative state data showed ND trending towards 30th Percentile in most categories for LGBTQ+ Outcomes.

ND School District's Data

- General Policy
 - 13.2% Require LGBTQ+ professional development
 - 63.2% Have comprehensive LGBTQ+ anti-bully policies
 - 18.4% Have transgender/non-binary student policies
- Protocol/Environment
 - 2.7% Have GSA's offered as co-curricular activities
 - 7.9% Identified LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum
 - 21.6% Identified teaching LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education
 - 23.7% Identified their environment as LGBTQ+ affirming
- Transgender/Non-Binary Inclusion
 - 73.7% Have policy to use preferred name/pronoun
 - 44.7% Have policy to use restroom matching gender identity
 - 21.6% Have policy to use locker room matching gender identity
 - 44.7% Instruct teachers to use preferred name/pronoun
 - 32.4% Have policy for trans athletes

ND School District's Current Policy Outcomes

- Reduces teacher LGBTQ+ supportive practices by 37.6% by not incorporating LGBTQ+ professional development training.
 - This creates a negative cascade across all outcomes related to school belonging, opportunity, and support
 - Reduces interventions in bias remarks, thereby increasing bullying and suicide
- Increases bullying/harassment by 12% by not including comprehensive LGBTQ+ anti-bullying/harassment policies.

- Staff is less likely intervene when hearing biased remarks
 - Students become less likely to report negative experience
 - Students find responses to these experiences less effective
 - Students have worse mental health and increased suicide attempts
- Increases discrimination instances by 89.5% for trans and non-binary students by not incorporating a trans-inclusive policy.
 - Increases suicide instances by an average of 56.3%
 - Decreases feelings of school belonging and associated benefits
 - Increases suicides by 38.2% by not achieving an LGBTQ+ affirming environment (safe zone stickers, openly LGBTQ+ staff, queer representation/flags.)
 - GSA not being classified as co-curricular activity result in:
 - Increase experience of feeling unsafe by 21%
 - Increase experiences of victimization by 53%
 - Increase missing attendance by 39.4%
 - Decrease in school belongingness and worse grades
 - Classrooms not including LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum result in:
 - Increase experiences of feeling unsafe by 34.9%
 - Increase experiences of victimization by 63.9%
 - Increase incidents of missing attendance by 46.8%
 - Reduce incidents of students intervening when hearing anti-LGBTQ+ remarks by 54.1%
 - Increase STI among queer community with LGBTQ+ inclusive sexual education

ND School District's Ability to Impact Change

- Increase teacher LGBTQ+ supportive practices by 60.2% by incorporating LGBTQ+ professional development training.
 - This creates a positive cascade across all outcomes related to school belonging, opportunity, and support
 - Increases interventions in bias remarks, reduces bullying and suicide
- Reduce bullying/harassment by 10.7% by including comprehensive LGBTQ+ anti-bullying/harassment policies.
 - Staff is more likely intervene when hearing biased remarks
 - Students become more likely to report negative experience
 - Students find responses to these experiences more effective
 - Students improve mental health, reduce suicides
- Reduce discrimination by 47.2% for trans and non-binary students by incorporating a trans-inclusive policy.
 - Reduces suicide instances by an average of 35.2%
 - Increase feelings of school belonging
- Reduce suicides by 27.6% by achieving an LGBTQ+ affirming environment (safe zone stickers, openly LGBTQ+ staff, queer representation/flags).

- GSA being classified as co-curricular activity result in:
 - Reduce feeling unsafe by 17.3%
 - Reduce victimization by 34.6%
 - Reduce missing attendance by 28.3%
 - Increase in school belongingness and associated benefits

- Classrooms including LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum result in:
 - Reduce feeling unsafe by 25.9%
 - Reduce victimization by 38.9%
 - Reduce missing attendance by 31.9%
 - Increase student intervention when hearing anti-LGBTQ+ Remarks by 118%
 - Reduce STI among queer community with LGBTQ+ inclusive sexual education

Data about school districts were compiled from interviews and emails with individuals from each school district in North Dakota, provided to us on a voluntary basis. We took school district data on these policies and compared them to policies/outcomes from three primary sources to result in the data above.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Available at: www.cdc.gov/YRBSS.
2. Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. (2016). From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers. New York: GLSEN
(https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/From_Teasing_to_Tormet_Revised_2016.pdf)
3. Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truong, N. L., & Zongrone, A. D. (2020). The 2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN.
(https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/NSCS19-FullReport-032421-Web_0.pdf)
4. The Trevor Project. (2021). 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project.
(<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2021/?section=Introduction>)

North Dakota LGBTQ+ School Climate Report

This report was created in response to the disproportionately negative outcomes we see for queer youth within North Dakota's Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Queer youth are four times as likely to attempt suicide and significantly more likely to experience bullying, sexual assault, use illicit substances, and have no social support structure compared to straight youth.

We have never within North Dakota had a formal statewide or comprehensive look into the outcomes these youth are experiencing or ways to mitigate those outcomes. This report is groundbreaking for North Dakota as it seeks to do both. It is structured informally as a means to allow people outside of academia and data research to be able to meaningfully engage with the content and material. As such, this report is intended to function as a community resource above all else.

This report is also designed to be the start of a statewide dialogue about how we can improve conditions for these youth. We have all of the data and resources necessary to achieve better outcomes in this state for queer youth and at the end of this report we have a call to action ensure we take actionable steps to make change.

Learning Objectives

- Be able to identify current outcomes for queer youth
- Be able to identify current LGBTQ+ policy structure within North Dakota
- Understand how policy impacts LGBTQ+ youth
- Develop meaningful strategies to reduce suicidality for LGBTQ+ Youth

Organizations

This report was created through Community Uplift Program (CUP), a 501(c)3 non-profit that seeks to improve outcomes for marginalized community members. CUP currently hosts a number of programs including Community Connect, Free Through Recovery, Harbor Health Initiative, and assistance with ND Rent Help applications.

This report was made possible by grant funding through The Consensus Council, Inc. a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered in the state of North Dakota. The Consensus Council, Inc. dedicates its resources and efforts to link grassroots citizens, regional organizations, special interest groups, businesses, government agencies, and others, to re-envision and enhance community structures and services and to craft foundational agreements that will improve the lives of all people and stand the test of time.

Methodology

This is not a traditional climate report for a number of reasons. Many reports like this are typically not accessible or usable by the general public. This report is intended to be approachable by anyone, regardless of their background or profession. It is intended to be easy to read, intuitive to understand, and offer meaningful actions individuals can take to make change at every level.

North Dakota is a local-control state, meaning there is currently no state oversight to the policies that school districts implement in regard to queer youth. With this in mind, the goal of this project was to identify all of these policies across all of our school districts and understand the impact these policies were having on queer youth. The way we achieved this was by looking at outcome data within *The*

2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools. We created 12 "Yes/No" questions based on this survey that measured four key components: Staff Training, District Policy, School Environment/Resources, and Transgender Student Integration.

We then took contact information provided by the North Dakota School Directory to identify 199 school districts. We used the state-issued ID to identify each of these school districts within our data collection. We called each school district and requested to speak to the superintendent as our first means of communication. We did this for the first 100 school districts, but stopped for two reasons. The first was that we rarely got a response. While we would leave messages and follow up with these school districts, we rarely got ahold of a superintendent and even when we did, many refused to participate. The second reason was that we found out that many school districts have been targeted constantly by reporters due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with one superintendent saying they'll never do another phone survey again.

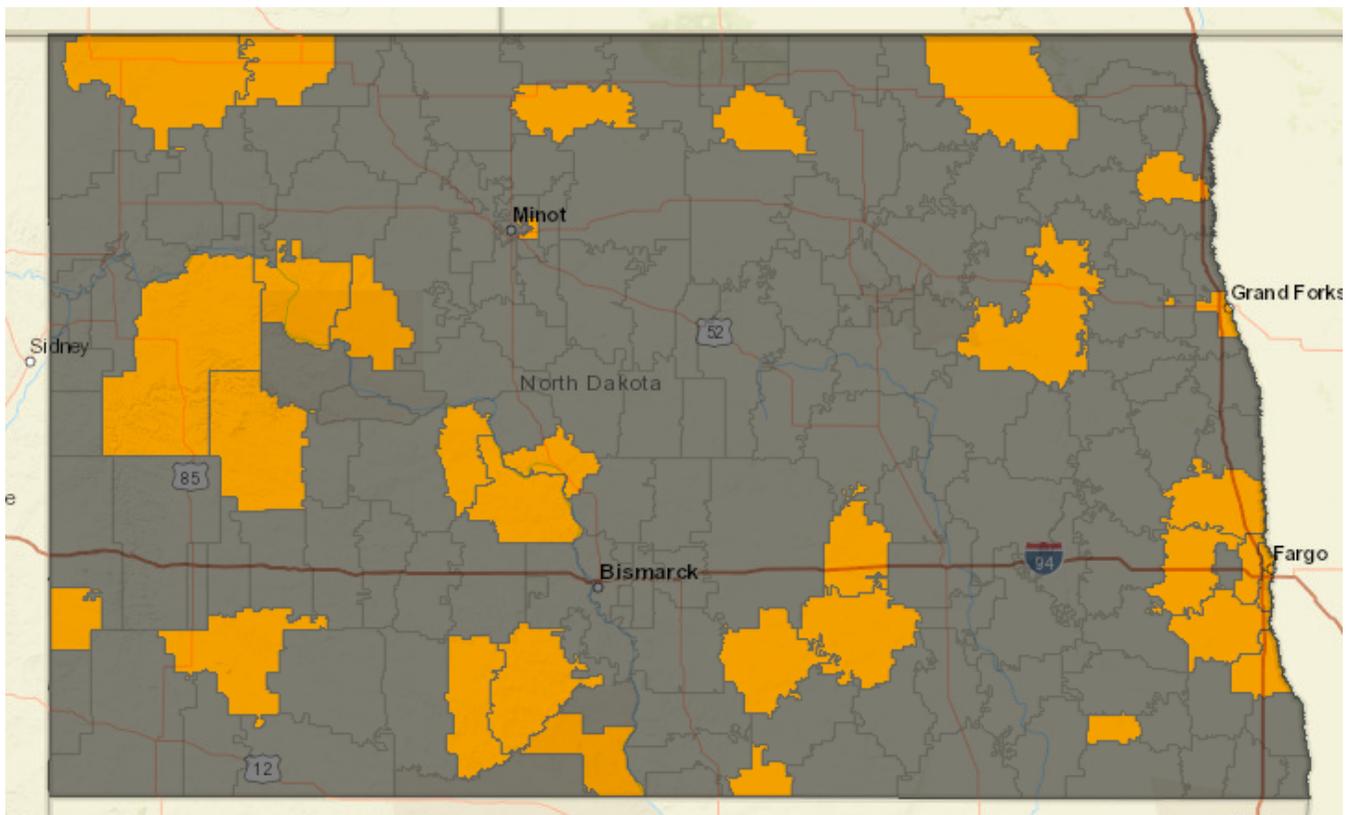
When we wrote this grant and designed this survey, it was before the pandemic had started impacting our school districts. We did not foresee this as a potential barrier, but it is very likely that it significantly hampered the participation in this project, as many school districts seemed especially weary of answering questions. We stopped referring to our attempts to collect data as a survey and started to reframe it as gathering data for a queer youth suicide prevention project. After we found calling to not be a successful approach, we started emailing school districts with this communication schedule:

Communication Schedule

- Email Superintendent once a week for four weeks
- Email Business manager once a week for four weeks
- Email a District Principal once a week for four weeks
- Email Student Counsellor once a week for four weeks

Each email would describe the project, what we are attempting to do with this project, and an invitation to speak over the phone about it. After no responses for four weeks, we'd move on to the next person on the list and try again. We attempted to be as transparent as possible about the project, what we were doing, and who we'd already talked to about it. Since the project was looking at structural data about things that either existed or didn't, we were not worried about biasing individuals by explaining intention. There was no style of communication or targeted role that seemed to significantly increase our response rate.

One important thing to understand about our data collection was that it didn't matter if the answers given were correct. It did matter that the person we spoke to perceived these answers to be based on the questions we asked. This is important because even if a school logistically has the best policy, if staff within the school are not aware of it, they effectively do not have that policy. We also didn't want to misrepresent these school districts, so we did follow up several times prior to publishing these results, by emailing the superintendent of every school district our district map and asking them to make any corrections. Even after this project is over, we will continue to keep this open as a live resource that we will monitor and update if anything is not correct. Below is a visual representation of which North Dakota school districts.



While we had thought of creating a map similar to the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) Equality Index maps to give a value system to each school, we felt that would not be productive because every school would show a failing score and it would set this project up as antagonistic towards schools. We determined that we'd simply share if a school had participated or not as the meaningful color overlay on the map. This way the map encourages individuals to simply participate in this project. As you can see from this map, while we did not get significant participation within this project, we did get a geographically diverse data set.

Another thing to keep in mind is that not every question could be applied to each school district meaningfully. We asked questions on if transgender students could use locker rooms for example, but not every school district even had locker rooms. This means we do allow (N/A) as an answer.

Finally, we connected the data between policies that exist or did not exist within North Dakota and data we gathered from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). We did this by looking at student outcomes within GLSEN's report for schools that had affirming policies compared to schools who did not. Taking the difference between these outcomes, we could get a scale of impact and then apply that scale to ND school districts as a whole. While this doesn't matter when looking at any individual school district, we want the conversation to be about what we can do as a state.

We could have more accurately gauged this data by comparing school district size and weighing the answers based on size rather than district. However, this creates its own problems, where data will queue to simply represent the larger school districts and completely ignore the dozens of smaller school districts throughout this state. This is why each school district is given equal value, regardless of size. Further, we want the conversation to be around how we can improve as a state, rather than targeting any specific school system. The overarching goal of this project was to create the space and

opportunity for schools to improve, rather than target or shame schools who didn't have affirming policies.

While we are isolating things such as the impact of policy on instances of bullying and then taking the impact of bullying on mental health, these are intersecting and complicated issues for which we'll never have exact answers. In many cases it can be less to do with if a school has an inclusive policy and more that a school that would draft an inclusive policy already has a safer learning environment. And while we can meaningfully connect policy to outcomes for queer youth, we already have the answers for how to make things better. All of the data and research we've conducted in psychology, biology, sociology, and by all of the associated school professional associations points in one direction -- when these students are loved and accepted for who they are, then all of these disproportionately negative outcomes will go away.

The question becomes, how do we address the cultural hostilities that prevent data and research from being utilized effectively? While the data we present here is groundbreaking for North Dakota, any educator could have walked away with the same understanding by simply reading through many of the reports GLSEN has published over the last decade. This is why beyond our report here, we are also including as many ND-specific tools to succeed as possible. We are addressing these cultural hostilities head-on, inviting stakeholders around our state to improve this report and in general calling folks to action. This is not the methodology of research -- this is the methodology for the cultural change we need to ensure these kids are safe.

We would also caution readers against getting the impression that non-participation in this project represents cultural bias or hostility from the school districts. Many of our school districts were and are continuing to manage the repercussions of a global pandemic. We do hope that when this report is released and circulated over the following school year, more schools will be made aware of it and make the time to actively participate in reducing suicidality for queer youth.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey

North Dakota included the demographic question of sexual orientation in the 2017 and 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey for both middle school and high school youth. The data below are specifically from middle schoolers in 2019, with one exception due to a question regarding bullying and LGBTQ+ identity only being asked in the high school survey.

We focused on the 2019 middle school data set because it represents the most relevant current outcomes. Not only does it show the trends for how these youth are likely doing in middle school, it is also painting the picture of the experiences they will take with them into high school. Regardless, the data stays fairly consistent between 2017 and 2019 and for the negative outcomes these youth experience as middle schoolers or high schoolers.

Unfortunately, these data do not include gender identity. This means we don't have an accurate picture of the experiences of non-binary or transgender students in North Dakota. One can look at any large survey featuring both sexual orientation and gender identity questions and see that the outcomes for transgender and non-binary students tend to be on par with or worse than lesbian, gay, or bisexual students. It is not a leap to assume that the gender-diverse students of North Dakota are suffering as much or worse than our gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. Often, when we talk about these data, we will generalize as the queer community or LGBTQ+ community with this assumption. The good news is that

in 2021, the North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey will ask students about gender identity and we will finally have specific data for this community.

As a final note, the data below is not comprehensive. We have summarized what we believe were four key components in this survey: suicide, mental health, bullying, and sexual health. There is also data to support that this community is at greater risk for homelessness, food insecurity, and physical inactivity. We even see that gay and lesbian youth are twice as likely to experience concussions when playing sports, which could suggest targeted violence.

Each single question is less important than the complete picture we are getting from how these students are answering every question. The data is overwhelmingly clear that gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are struggling significantly in North Dakota.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey Question	Identity	Percent
NDM19q58-CDC Q72 (MSxDscr). Which of the following best describes you?	Straight	79.1
	Gay or Les	1.8
	Bisexual	6.4
	Not Sure	8.0

Youth Risk Behavior Survey Question - Suicide	LGB	Straight
NDM19q14-CDC Q14 (MScdCnsdr). Have you ever seriously thought about killing yourself?	61.6%	19.1%
NDM19q15-CDC Q15 (MScdPln).Have you ever made a plan about how you would kill yourself?	48.5%	13.1%
NDM19q16-CDC Q16 (MScdAttmpt). Have you ever tried to kill yourself?	33.3%	7.4%

Youth Risk Behavior Survey Question - Mental Health	LGB		Straight	
NDM19q52-CDC Q68 (MProbTlk). When you feel sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious, with whom would you most likely talk about it?	Not Sad	8.1%	Not Sad	23.9%
	Parent	13.0%	Parent	25.7%
	Teacher	2.4%	Teacher	1.2%
	Friend	44.9%	Friend	27.7%
	No Idea	26.7%	No Idea	16.6%
NDM19q54-CDC Q70 (MSchTrstAdlt). Is there at least one teacher or other adult in your school that you can talk to if you have a problem?	51.7%		65.8%	
NDM19q49-CDC Q65 (MMHbad30d). During the past 30 days, on how many days was your mental health not	0 days	16.1%	0 days	47.6%

good?	1 or 2	12.9%	1 or 2	21.5%
	3 to 6	9.9%	3 to 6	10.0%
	7 to 13	14.3%	7 to 13	8.2%
	14 to 29	19.1%	14 to 29	6.6%
	30 days	27.7%	30 days	6.1%

Youth Risk Behavior Survey Question - Bullying	LGB	Straight
NDM19q11-CDC Q12 (MBillyOSP). Have you ever been bullied on school property?	59.6%	37.8%
NDM19q12-CDC Q13 (MBillyElct). Have you ever been electronically bullied?	45.6%	22.7%
NDH19q23-CDC Q94 (HBillyLGB). During the past 12 months, have you ever been the victim of teasing or name calling because someone thought you were gay, lesbian, or bisexual?	42.2%	8.7%

Youth Risk Behavior Survey Question - Sexual Health	LGB	Straight
NDM19q10-CDC Q50 (MFrcdSxAct). During past 12 months, did someone do sexual things to you that you did not want to do by pressuring you, lying to you, making promises about future, threatening to end relationship/spread	21.3%	7.0%
NDM19q57-CDC Q71 (MSxSxtng). During the past 30 days, have you texted, e-mailed, or posted electronically a revealing or sexual photo of yourself?	9.8%	3.3%
NDM19q55-CDC Q34 (MSxEvr). Have you ever had sexual intercourse?	13.4%	5.1%

Project Outcomes

This section will explore the questions we developed and what we were trying to understand by asking them. Each question was intended to tie meaningfully to existing data in some relevant way. Below are the questions, followed by the average of answers by each of the participating school districts. While we only have responses from approximately 20% of total school districts, we believe that those who responded were more likely to have affirming policies than those who did not respond. So, while this data is not as accurate as it could be, it is very likely that the results are far worse than what is represented here. While our data is limited, it is geographically diverse, covering school districts throughout our state.

Total School Districts Identified: 199 Participation: 38			
	Staff Training	Yes	No

Q1	Does the district require teachers to have professional development around LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency?	13.2	86.8
	District Policy	Yes	No
Q2	Does the district have any policy explicitly giving protections for gender identity and sexual orientation within anti harassment and discrimination policies?	63.2	36.8
Q3	Does the district have a clear policy and procedure that specifically addresses the needs of transgender and non-binary students?	18.4	81.6
	School Resources	Yes	No
Q4	Does the district encourage GSA's to be offered as co-curricular activity?	2.7	97.3
Q5	Does the district encourage teachers to integrate LGBTQ+ topics within the classroom?	7.9	92.1
Q6	Does the district encourage LGBTQ+ Issues to be covered in Health Class/Sexual Education.	21.6	78.4
Q7	Can LGBTQ+ Individuals see themselves within the school? Pride Flags, Queer Pamphlets, Student Handbook, Openly Queer Staff, Etc.	23.7	76.3
	Transgender Student Integration	Yes	No
Q8	Is a student able to use a preferred name in all places where a legal name is not required?	73.7	26.3
Q9	Is the student able to use a restroom in correspondence to their gender identity?	44.7	55.3
Q10	Is the student able to use the locker room in correspondence to their gender identity?	21.6	78.4
Q11	Are there clear guidelines for teachers to use a child's preferred name and pronouns within class?	44.7	55.3
Q12	Are there clear guidelines or instructions for transgender athletes	32.4	71.7

The quotations and statistics that we discuss below are from ND Youth Risk Behavior Survey, GLSEN, and Trevor Project, unless otherwise cited directly in the question analysis.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
 - a. www.cdc.gov/YRBSS
2. Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truong, N. L., & Zongrone, A. D. (2020). The 2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN.
 - a. https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/NSCS19-FullReport-032421-Web_0.pdf
3. Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. (2016). From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers. New York: GLSEN
 - a. https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/From_Teasing_to_Torment_Revised_2016.pdf
4. The Trevor Project. (2019). National Survey on LGBTQ Mental Health. New York, New York: The Trevor Project.

- a. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/2019/06/27/research-brief-accepting-adults-reduce-suicide-attempts-among-lgbtq-youth/>

Q1: Are teachers required to be trained in LGBTQ+ cultural competency?

Yes	13.2%
No	86.8%

Q1 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data from GLSEN's Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teacher - Figure 2.15

Supportive practice engagement without professional development training = 41.4%
 Supportive practice engagement with professional development training = 73%
 Therefore increase in supportive practices by having policy = 76.3%

13.2% Schools districts currently have professional development training
 ND school districts are currently reducing supportive practices by 37.6%
 If all ND schools had training, then we would increase supportive practices by 60.2%

Q1 - Discussion

This question is designed to assess if there is required training on LGBTQ+ issues within a school district. GLSEN reported that "all types of PD (i.e., bullying, diversity, LGB issues, and transgender issues) were related to LGBT-supportive practices. For each type of professional development, teachers who had received it were more likely to engage in practices supportive of LGBT students than those who had not." They observed that general professional development on bullying was not an effective determinant in increasing awareness or intervention when bullying targeted LGBTQ+ individuals.

"School or district-wide educator professional development training on issues specifically related to LGBTQ students and bias based bullying and harassment may better equip educators with tools for effectively intervening in cases of bullying of LGBTQ students. In addition, such training may help educators become more aware of the experiences of LGBTQ students, including incidents of harassment and bullying, which could play a vital role in improving LGBTQ students' school experiences overall."

Further, we find that teachers are less likely to have any professional development with LGB issues or transgender issues from previous positions or pre-services. Nearly 90% of teachers within the GLSEN report reported that policies, supportive administration, training, and GSAs would all be very helpful for creating safer school environments. Teachers are more comfortable and more likely to engage in LGBTQ+ inclusive practices if there is clear policy.

There is no question that queer youth face disproportional amounts of bullying. Research from GLSEN suggests that professional development and clear policy around bullying can improve these results. While we'll talk about bullying in more detail within the next question, without comprehensive training on LGBTQ+ professional development, every other effort a school engages in will simply fall flat.

A student's experience is not the words written within the policy, it is how individual staff, administrators, and teachers interact with that student. Queer students in North Dakota experience disproportionate amounts of bullying because teachers are not intervening or recognizing this behavior. Or there isn't a strong enough policy to make them feel safe in upholding equity within the

classroom. Queer students are more likely to feel like there isn't clear consequence for behavior and are less likely to report having one adult they know they can turn to. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, it is unlikely school staff are made aware of many of these problems considering how many youth don't turn to adults when things are going wrong. This can give the false impression that a school's queer youth are not experience significant problems.

It is worth noting that increasing intervention in LGBTQ+ bullying and promoting better LGBTQ+ inclusive practices will increase the amount of supportive adults in a student's life. Trevor Project has identified just one affirming adult can reduce suicidality by 40% and teachers can fill that role. This would have the single most dramatic impact on youth outcomes.

California found this training to be so important that they devoted 3 million dollars in state funding to providing LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency to staff. While training does unfortunately mean devoting funding to an already overburdened budget that many schools struggle with, we cannot continue to afford ignoring this problem either. Our queer students are dying. There are plenty of resources in our resource section on where schools can look towards training both in and out of our state.

Modern surveyed data from Gallop shows that approximately 16% of generation Z identifies under the queer umbrella, so when we discuss funding and training opportunities, this is a significant part of the population who deserves teachers that can understand and interact with this demographic. This is not a special interest group, this is a significant part of our student body. The data this report gathered suggests that teachers are extremely undertrained to handle the needs of LGBTQ+ students and we see this reflected across all outcomes in our Youth Risk Behavior Survey data.

Q2: Does the district have any policy explicitly giving protections for gender identity and sexual orientation within anti-harassment and discrimination policies?

Yes	63.2%
No	36.8%

Q2 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data From GLSEN 2019 School Climate Survey - Figure 2.26

Victimization incidents with general anti-bullying policies = 30.5%

Victimization incidents with comprehensive anti-bullying policies = 23%

Therefore reduction of victimization by having policy = 24.6%

63.2% of school districts have an LGBTQ+ anti-bullying policy

ND school districts are currently increasing victimization by 12%

If all ND school districts had policy, then total reduction of victimization would be 10.7%

Q2 - Discussion

Anti-harassment/discrimination policy that included specific protections for LGBTQ+ students made teachers more comfortable in intervening when hearing negative remarks directed towards someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. Written policy has a number of positive impacts on the school climate in general. Without explicit policy, students are more likely to experience negative remarks, less likely to report negative remarks, and are more likely to experience bullying. This directly correlates to LGBTQ+ students feeling less safe, having worse mental health, and increased suicidality, all of which are reflected in current ND Data.

Interestingly, we often think about this as the impact it has on queer students, but 8% of straight students reported being bullied in our state because they were perceived to be LGBTQ+, according to our Youth Risk Behavior Survey for highschool students. This means straight students in high school are experiencing LGBTQ+ targeted bullying at twice the frequency of queer students. This means queer related bullying is impacting approximately 40% of straight students who experience bullying. While it is important to explicitly include these protections, it is more important to make sure the school also makes a declarative statement that bullying or harassment targeting sexual orientation and gender identity will not be tolerated. Then actually take the next step of not tolerating it.

In 2018, Chance Houle, a 12 year old transgender youth died by suicided with implications that bullying was at least partially responsible. Three years later, in 2021, that same school district had a report of homophobic bullying targeting LGBTQ+ youth that continued to persist to the point the parents of the youth felt the need to demand action from the school board and superintendent. While these reports become very public, hundreds of other instances occur across ND without ever making the news. The second leading cause of death for youth in North Dakota is suicide and talking to LGBTQ+ adults who grew up in this state and looking at the data from our 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, we can clearly see that experiences of bullying impact the majority of these queer youth to devastating and lethal results.

The data from this report shows our schools are starting to address LGBTQ+ bullying in policy, but we still have a ways to go. The data also confirms that while policy does have an impact by itself, this impact is marginal compared to efforts to improve school climate as a whole. The biggest impact is a cultural shift towards acceptance and inclusion.

One thing our data isn't touching on here is that many youth of color experience racially motivated bullying and harassment. Queer youth of color experience the intersection of racism and queerphobia and the subsequent impact on mental health. While we have had clear anti-bullying policies around race for decades, these youth still experience disproportionate amounts of abuse. This highlights that policy does have an impact, but it cannot by itself change the culture that leads to this violence. Many youth, especially youth of color and queer youth get bullied when adults are not around. Many of these experiences never make official reports. This data shows our youth can rarely identify adults to talk to when someone is going wrong. Schools can easily have significant problems with bullying, while also never hearing about nor being made aware of them.

Q3: Does the district have a clear policy and procedure that specifically addresses the needs of transgender and non-binary students.

Yes	18.4%
No	81.6%

Q3 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data from GLSEN 2019 School Climate Survey - Figure 2.29

Discrimination in schools without transgender and non-binary student policies = 49.7%

Discrimination in schools with transgender and non-binary student policies = 23.7%

Therefore reduction of discrimination by having policy = 52.3%

18.4% of school districts have an transgender and non-binary student.

ND school districts are currently increasing discrimination by 89.5%

If all ND school districts had policy, then total reduction in discrimination instances would be 47.2%

Q3 - Discussion

Gender-diverse students experience significantly worse outcomes when a school does not have a formal policy designed to integrate their unique needs. North Dakota does not have data specific to transgender students, but lacking local data, we can presume their outcomes are at least equivalent to or worse than national data. We will have data from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey once it is released.

Of the school districts who responded to us, the most quoted reason for not having policy was that a school has never encountered a transgender or non-binary youth. We can see throughout the nation over the last decade countless stories of trans youth attempting to transition within a school system that has not set up any formal policy and the nightmare that creates for these youth and for schools. Often these schools become a battleground, with the transgender youth and school becoming the target of harassment and victimization.

One can see how prohibitive this would be for youth and their family, who likely just want their kid to be happy and thrive, who don't want to be a martyr or a center of attention. By population data we know that approximately 1.8% of youth identify as transgender and a growing number of students are identifying as non-binary. If a school district has 100 students then it is very likely that school district has at least one transgender student. It is essential to create these policies and procedures ahead of time, to ensure that youth, families, and staff all know exactly what the policy is and how it will play out. We have several models to choose from and our own North Dakota School Board Association has a template policy that takes into account both legality and data-driven evidence to formulate the best procedures for schools to adapt. If there are complaints about this policy, one can refer to this higher authority, since the policy is simply a reflection of best practice, based on data. Also, within the supporting practices we include at the end of this report, every major association related to administration, teaching, or coaching has detailed and instructive guidelines for professionals to be affirming.

Following the data, research, and expert opinion is important not just for the safety of trans and non-binary students, but to protect schools from lawsuits for mishandling these students and situations. Many schools throughout our nation have had lawsuits levied against them for discriminating against youth and more often than not it is the trans youth who will win these lawsuits. While the Bostock Supreme Court Case codified legal protections for employees under Title VII, it also made a strong case law that discriminating against someone based on sexual orientation and gender identity is sex discrimination within all regards. The Biden Administration is also taking a very strong stance on inclusive measures being required for federal funding. While our North Dakota Department of Labor and Human rights also interprets gender identity and sexual orientation to be protected classes within the ND Human Rights Act:

"It is the Department's opinion the Bostock definition of sex, may and should be applied to the North Dakota Human Rights Act, as amended, and the Housing Discrimination Act, as amended. Therefore, effective June 15, 2020, the Department will be accepting and investigating complaints of discrimination, based on sexual orientation and gender identity, in all human rights laws the Department enforces, including employment, public services, public accommodations, credit transactions, and housing. The Department is in the process of updating all of its intake forms and educational material, to reflect the Bostock decision."

It is important to note transgender and nonbinary student policies are built with flexibility in mind and if any student is uncomfortable in gendered restrooms or locker rooms, they should be allowed to use a private space. Regardless, here is a quote from a judge involved in the appeal of Gavin Grimm who sued his school for being denied using the bathroom matching his gender identity. 1.3 million dollars was awarded to his legal team in the settlement.

"At the heart of this appeal is whether equal protection and Title IX can protect transgender students from school bathroom policies that prohibit them from affirming their gender. We join a growing consensus of courts in holding that the answer is resoundingly yes."

There is fear that inclusive policies will result in harassment or boys pretending to be girls to invade these spaces, but this does not exist in reality to the extent in which we would need to segregate an entire category of people. Comprehensive policy is designed to make sure transition is right for a student. It is often a months-long process that involves discussion between school administrators, parents, and student expectations. It is a journey that is often very difficult for the student and can easily expose them to harassment, bullying, and violence. No student is going through all of this effort simply to be able to spy or harass someone else. Nonetheless, if any student is inappropriate within rest rooms or locker rooms, whether they are transgender or not, this is and should be taken seriously by school districts and handled accordingly.

The data from this question shows that our school systems are currently ill-equipped to handle or effectively respond to the needs of transgender youth. These kids need significantly more support than they're getting now.

Q4: Does the district encourage GSA's to be offered as co-curricular student clubs

Yes	2.7%
No	97.3%

Q4 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data From GLSEN 2019 School Climate Survey - Figure 2.11, Figure 2.12

2.7% of districts of School Districts have GSA as co-curricular activity - Given this represents only one school district in ND, we'll just work with the default values seen in GLSEN.

LGBTQ+ students who felt unsafe without GSA 56.7%

LGBTQ+ students who felt unsafe with GSA 46.9%

Therefore reduction in feelings of being unsafe = 17.3%

ND school districts are currently increasing feeling unsafe by 21%

If all ND school districts had GSA, then total reduction in feeling unsafe would be 17.3%

LGBTQ+ students victimized likelihood without GSA = 38.1%

LGBTQ+ students victimized likelihood with GSA = 24.9%

Therefore reduction in feelings of being victimization = 34.6%

ND school districts are currently increasing victimization by 53%

If all ND school districts had GSA, then total reduction in victimization would be 34.6%

LGBTQ+ students missing one day of school likelihood without GSA = 39.6

LGBTQ+ students missing one day of school likelihood with GSA = 28.4

Therefore GSAs reduces instances of missing school by = 28.3%

ND school districts are currently increasing missing school by 39.4%

If all ND school districts had GSA, then total reduction of missing school would be 28.3%

Q5 - Discussion

Gender Sexuality Alliances (GSA) have a number of benefits for all students, but often they are only allowed as student-led organizations: non-curricular or extracurricular. This creates significant pressure, hostility, and even harassment for a queer youth attempting to start a supportive club within

a hostile school environment. Even if a successful GSA is created, it can disappear completely once the student leader graduates, and with that the school and students within it will lose all the benefits of having one.

Gay–Straight Alliances Impact on School Climate and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender Student Well-Being states:

“Research suggests that GSAs are effective in creating a more positive school culture and climate (Heck, Flentje & Cochran, 2013; GLSEN, 2011; Goodenow et al., 2006; Heck et al., 2013; Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Lee, 2002; Toomey et al., 2011; Walls et Ideas and Research You Can Use: VISTAS 2014 7 al., 2010). GSAs help students feel safer, and they are less likely to hear discriminatory comments, while the frequency of LGBT bullying incidents declines, and students are better able to identify supportive adults with whom to connect (GLSEN, 2011; Goodenow et al., 2006; Lee, 2002; Szalacha, 2003). GSAs improve LGBT student motivation and bolster academic achievement (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Lee, 2002). Of critical importance is that research suggests incidents of suicide decrease and there are lower levels of depression found in LGBT students (Toomey et al., 2011). In the long term, students have higher overall psychosocial well-being and an increased chance of graduating college (Toomey et al., 2011; Walls et al., 2010). These are among the distinct features that schools with GSAs manifest, as contrasted with their non-GSA counterparts. While academic literature clearly conveys the benefits of GSAs, there are still schools and individuals who resist the creation of these important student organizations (GLSEN, 2011)”

The biggest issue is co-curricular vs non-curricular activity. Many school districts are under the false impression that Gender Sexuality Alliance must be a non-curricular activity. However, the important issue is simply whether this group meets the standards for a co-curricular activity. We have data-driven evidence that shows GSA's have a positive impact on school climate for all students. 40% straight students who experience bullying because other classmates thought they were queer. A GSA can reduce bullying for all students and therefore mitigate the harmful impact bullying has for everyone. This means that a GSA improves mental health, attendance, and grades for a school system. This alone will often meet the criteria needed to be a co-curricular activity in many districts or states. Some criteria involves a group being open to everyone and GSA's often can and do allow allies to attend to learn more about queer individuals. It can be based around education, history, or activity - these are board open ended groups designed to meet the needs of schools and students.

A common argument against GSA's being co-curricular activities is that if they can be considered this, then shouldn't Christian groups also be considered co-curricular activities? And this is a bit of false equivalency. GSA's have no direct relationship to faith groups and faith groups are welcome to advocate for meeting the criteria established for co-curricular activities and regulations set around forming these groups. Often faith based groups are denied due to the school funding that is put into staff to host groups and it would be unfair to give a specific faith this benefit while denying other faith based groups this same benefit. While this report doesn't seek to understand nor could adequately cover the scope of all of the issues related to faith based groups exclusion/inclusion within the co-curricular discussion, what we know is GSAs do qualify and benefit all students.

The data from this question paints the picture that there is no institutional support structure that exists for these queer youth and to create it is on the burden of the youth who are already struggling. This resource is the least common item from all listed resources to exist, either as a co-curricular or extracurricular activity. The ND GSA Network, which is a collection of all identified GSA's within ND only has approximately 10 GSAs throughout this entire state, often located within single schools rather than being accessible by entire districts.

Q5: Does the district encourage teachers to integrate LGBTQ+ topics within the classroom?

Yes	7.9 %
No	92.1%

Q5 - Comparative Data Analysis

GLSEN 2019 School Climate Survey Figure 2.15 to 2.17

Frequency of hearing anti-LGBTQ+ remarks with inclusive classroom = 19.3%
 Frequency of hearing anti-LGBTQ+ remarks without inclusive classroom = 32.6%
 Therefore reduction of hearing anti-LGBTQ+ = 40.1%
 ND School Districts are currently increasing frequency of anti-lgbtq+ remarks by 63.9%
 If all ND school districts had inclusive classroom, then total reduction in frequency of anti-LGBTQ remarks would be 38.9%

LGBTQ+ students who felt unsafe with inclusive classroom = 39%
 LGBTQ+ students who felt unsafe without inclusive classroom = 53%
 Therefore reduction in feeling unsafe = 27.4%
 ND school districts are currently increasing LGBTQ+ students feeling unsafe by 34.9%
 If all ND school districts had inclusive classroom, then total reduction in feeling unsafe would be 25.9%

LGBTQ+ students missing one day of school likelihood with inclusive classroom = 23.2%
 LGBTQ+ students missing one day of school likelihood without inclusive classroom = 35%
 Therefor reduction missing one day of school = 33.7%
 ND school districts are currently increasing missing school by 46.84%
 If all ND school districts had inclusive classroom, then total reduction in feeling unsafe would be 31.9%

Students intervention in anti-LGBTQ+ remarks with inclusive classroom = 13.9%
 Students intervention in anti-LGBTQ+ remarks without inclusive classroom = 6.1%
 Therefore Increases intervention in anti-LGBTQ+ remarks = 127%
 ND School Districts are currently reducing student intervention by 54.1%
 If all ND school districts had inclusive classroom, then total increase in student intervention would be 118%

Q5 - Discussion

When we teach about LGBTQ+ topics, that helps to reduce cultural stigma and hostility towards queer individuals. This allows a more welcoming environment for queer students, less homophobic remarks, and less negative remarks about transgender individuals. This also increases the likelihood that students will intervene in the event they hear something homophobic.

There is unfortunately a segment of the population that would see these efforts as negative or that see any kind of acceptance or normalization of queer individuals as unacceptable. You can see grown adults trying to boycott libraries that even feature LGBTQ+ books, demand the material be removed, or require 'contrary' positions to serve as a balance. In 2017, two North Dakota legislators condemned one of our local school libraries for promoting books featuring queer topics with some of these considerations.

The interesting thing here is that the individuals who oppose any representation of queer identity can completely agree with the data we've represented here, but want to see the opposite out of it. The data we present here in reverse is a provable way to hurt queer folk. If we erase queer identity or present it as unacceptable, it will then increase bullying, it will make queer students feel unsafe, avoid school, or run away. While it will not impact the amount of individuals who are queer, it will definitely

make those who are queer less likely to come out and more likely to experience the negative hardships we see in this state. The data supports this by showing how unlikely queer students are to turn to adults when feeling significant psychological distress.

When looking at this from the perspective of teachers or administrators for public schools, there is an ethical duty for allowing all students to thrive. The facts on the table are some kids are going to be part of the LGBTQ+ community, so it stands to reason some material within the classroom should represent them. If they are part of a school system, they should be reflected in that system. They should have the option to read books featuring characters that they can relate to. They should learn of historical figures that were also queer. They should see that being queer is just a part of being human, because by all available data in science, psychology, or sociology indicates this. But above all else, if they don't feel like they exist, if they don't feel like they belong, these are the students that will be lost to homelessness or self harm. Offering LGBTQ+ topics within a classroom creates the space for discussion, understanding, and community - something all kids deserve.

That data shows we are not sending a positive message to LGBTQ+ youth and it's reflected in every negative outcome we see. If we want to reduce suicidality in this population, we must let these youth know that it's okay to be queer. It is essential to understand that there is not a middle ground between accepting queer youth and harming them. There is not a position that will satisfy the safety of queer youth, while making individuals who hate queer identity happy. And while some folks take great offense to any sort of queer inclusion, their feelings should not be given equal weight to the actual lives of queer people.

Q6: Does the district encourage LGBTQ+ issues to be covered in health class

Yes	21.6%
No	78.4%

Q6 - Comparative Data Analysis

Unlike our other sections within this report, this question does not have meaningful data to correlate to outcomes. The link below covers a general policy direction encouraged by a number of leading advocates for human rights and youth advocacy.

- <https://www.hrc.org/resources/a-call-to-action-lgbtq-youth-need-inclusive-sex-education>

Q6 - Discussion

Queer students in North Dakota are more likely to have sex, less likely to use protection, and more likely to experience sexual violence. The Human Rights Campaign did research into this where they reported that:

“Sex education can be one of the few sources of reliable information on sexuality and sexual health for youth. Hundreds of studies have shown that well-designed and well-implemented sex education can reduce risk behavior and support positive sexual health outcomes among teens, such as reducing teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection rates.”

Their report went on to say that queer youth are not likely to see themselves represented within sexual health classes and will not benefit from these positive outcomes these classes offer if that is the case. The data we collected here reflects that sexual health representation is lacking in this state. There is actually not significant data showing a relationship between LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education and a reduction in sexual violence or STI/HIV transmission. There just isn't data on this

that we could find. The consensus from organizations that look into this suggest that inclusive sex education is likely to confer the benefits from the research above and this logically does follow. We just simply don't have actual data.

One thing that we also know is that North Dakota in general is struggling with comprehensive sexual education. We are a state that requires abstinence-based education, without regard to teaching comprehensive sexual education, STI/HIV prevention, or things like condom use. We see a significant amount of sexual partner violence within queer relationships and this can be explained by these youth not understanding healthy boundaries, what queer relationships look like, or who to turn to for help.

We don't make these issues go away by not talking about them. The data is very clear on this, that as youth mature sexually, they're going to explore sex. When they do this without education on safe sex practices, this results in unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection, which increase rates of abortion in the former and has a negative impact on mental health and self-esteem. While sexual education can still advocate for the benefits of abstinence as 100% effective for unwanted pregnancy or STIs, we can do so much more to impact health outcomes in this area.

Looking at the efforts of community advocates, healthcare specialists, and doctors in this state over the last few decades, we have trended towards leading sexual health education in our state with feelings over data. We have seen sexual health education become itself a hot-button issue, sometimes along partisan lines, which only serves as an extreme disservice to our youth. It is regrettable that we as a state do not do more to support or protect our youth.

This question shows that ND is consistent with the rest of the nation in not providing LGBTQ+-inclusive sexual education as a whole. This has had a negative impact on the sexual health and overall health of queer students and the negative impacts in terms of sexual coercion/sexual assault are significantly higher for this population than for straight, cisgender youth. This can and does impact straight students, who may partner with students who are bisexual and engage in sexual conduct with same sex partners. Unfortunately, there is no possible way to improve these outcomes without systematically improving a sexual health education system that was drafted a decade ago and not supported by science or recommended by best practices.

Q7: Can LGBTQ+ Individuals see themselves within the school? Pride Flags, Queer Pamphlets, Student Handbook, Openly Queer Staff, Etc.

Yes	23.7%
No	76.3%

Q7 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data from "Affirming Spaces" - The Trevor Project. (2021). 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project

When school has affirming environment, suicide attempts = 12%
 When school is not affirming, suicide attempts = 18%
 Therefore reduction for suicide attempts from affirming environment = 33%

23.7% of school districts have an LGBTQ+ affirming environment.
 ND school districts are currently increasing suicide attempts by 38.2%
 If all ND school districts had inclusive environments, then total reduction in suicide attempts would be 27.6%

Q7 - Discussion

Local data shows that queer students are significantly more likely to experience bad mental health and not know who to talk to about it. This question is looking at this dynamic and understanding that when we have no queer representation within our environment, it is less likely students will reach out when a problem occurs.

While we've talk about this in length in previous sections of this report, GLSEN finds that "the degree to which students feel accepted by and a part of their school community is another important indicator of school climate and is related to a number of educational outcomes, including greater academic motivation and effort and higher academic achievement. Students who experience victimization or discrimination at school may feel excluded and disconnected from their school community."

The report further indicates that LGBTQ+ students experience instances of being disciplined for displaying public affection in a way straight youth are not, not allowed to attend dances with their partner, not able to use LGBTQ+ topics on class projects, or wear LGBTQ+ theme clothing. This sends messages to these youths that who they are is not welcomed at best or wrong at worst. It is these messages that they get, over and over again, which instill negative self-perception and make them less likely to trust that they can be helped by school staff.

If there is nothing in the environment reflecting queer identity, the message is queer individuals are not included or welcomed. To achieve better outcomes, to increase school belonging and all the associated benefits of school belonging, then a school must create space for these students to exist. GLSEN goes on to say:

"Supportive teachers and other school staff members serve an important function in the lives of LGBTQ youth, helping them feel safer in school, as well as promoting their sense of school belonging and psychological well-being. One way that educators can demonstrate their support for LGBTQ youth is through visible displays of such support, such as "Safe Space" stickers and queer related posters . . .

We asked students if they had seen Safe Space stickers or posters displayed in their school, and nearly two-thirds of LGBTQ students (62.8%) in the survey reported seeing these materials at their school. The presence of LGBTQ school personnel who are out or open at school about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity may provide another source of support for LGBTQ students. In addition, the number of out LGBTQ personnel may provide a sign of a more supportive and accepting school climate. Nearly half of students (48.8%) in our survey said they could identify at least one out LGBTQ staff person at their school."

The Trevor project isolated suicidality as compared to affirming spaces and when youth do not have access to these spaces they're more likely to attempt suicide. The data shows we have significant work in making schools more inclusive and the current suicidality can likely be explained at least in part to how isolated and alone these students currently feel.

Q8: Is a student able to use a preferred name in all places where a legal name is not required?

Yes	73.7%
No	26.3%

Q8 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data from "Supporting Transgender Nonbinary Youth" - The Trevor Project. (2020). 2020 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project

When trans youth has pronoun respect in all areas, suicide attempts = 12%
 When trans youth has pronoun respect in all areas, suicide attempts = 28%
 Therefore suicide reduction by respecting pronouns in all spaces = 57.1%

73.7% of school districts allow using youth's chosen name.
 School districts are currently increasing suicides by 35.1%
 If all ND school districts allowed all students to use preferred name, then total reduction in suicide attempts would be 26%

Q8 - Discussion

Data shows that being able to use the correct name and pronoun has a significant reduction in depression, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts according to both clinical research and community survey data. The Trevor Project further confirms that misgendering students or calling them by a name/pronoun they don't prefer can increase suicidality. This question was designed to capture how many school districts were allowing students to go by a chosen name. The question doesn't align neatly with the data outcomes from Trevor Project, because the data measures a degree of variance between the frequency of a student being identified by chosen name/pronoun. A school isn't the entirety of a child's life, but it is a significant portion of it. Regardless, according to the data, as long as a child's home or school is using the correct pronouns, they will do better than otherwise. The best outcomes are when they are totally accepted for who they are or at the very least are allowed to explore their identity safely.

This was the most likely question on the survey to be answered "yes". Many school districts reported not having an issue calling youth by a chosen name. Many districts self-reported that they were also inclusive of chosen pronouns. Even schools who were hesitant around other inclusive efforts, did not have much issue with using a chosen name. Power Schools, the system many schools use for students, allows a preferred name option within it.

One thing that is important to recognize is if you have a little boy going to school, who is constantly called a girl, a feminine sounding name, pushed into the girls rest room, and so on -- we can easily recognize that as bullying or even abuse. What is harder for some individuals to wrap their head around is that a transgender boy (someone assigned female at birth, but identifies as male) would experience the same psychological distress as the non-trans boy in those circumstances.

The Department of Education Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Suzanne Goldberg, in a 2021 back-to-school message for transgender students said, "We know you are resilient and we hope you will find support where and when you need it. But we also want you to know the Department of Education and the entire federal government stand behind you. Your rights at school matter. You matter."

Goldberg indicated that students who felt they were discriminated against could file a complaint with the Education Departments' Office for Civil Rights and that they would investigate these complaints. While we explore the rest of the questions within these sections, it is important to understand that transgender and non-binary students have legal rights. Even if school districts don't want to adopt better policies to get better outcomes for these students, it is not worth risking a lawsuit and getting national attention for discriminating against these youths.

Q9: Is the student able to use a restroom in correspondence to their gender identity?

Yes	44.7%
No	55.3%

Q9 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data from “Discrimination” - The Trevor Project. (2021). 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project

Suicide attempts for trans youth who did not experience discrimination were 12%

Suicide attempts for trans youth who experience discrimination were 24%

Therefore suicide reduction by reducing experience of discrimination = 50%

44.7% of school districts allow students to use the restroom of their gender identity.

ND school districts are currently increasing suicides attempts by 55.3%

If all ND school districts had inclusive restroom practices, then total reduction in suicide attempts would be 35.6%

Q9 - Discussion

This question was designed to see how many school districts have formal policies for trans youth to be able to use the restroom corresponding to their gender identity. With Gavin Grimm winning his appeals case, the current case law would suggest it is likely illegal to discriminate against transgender youth and prevent them from using the restroom that matches their gender under title IX. The only thing that would potentially change this would be a Supreme Court ruling. As mentioned earlier in this report, queer youth in North Dakota have legal protections under the ND Human Rights Act. Regardless, It is important that schools have inclusive policies, because bathrooms can be scary places for these youth.

In GLSEN’s report, they said “Over a quarter of LGBTQ students (28.4%) said that they had been prevented from using the bathroom aligned with their gender. Policies and practices that restrict bathroom access may have a particularly damaging impact on LGBTQ youth, including physical health complications if students are forced to avoid using the bathroom during the school day. In fact, we found that LGBTQ students were approximately twice as likely to avoid the bathroom at school if they experienced bathroom discrimination (71.8% vs. 34.6%).”

This means LGBTQ+ youth in general and transgender youth in particular may completely avoid using the restroom the entire day. They often achieve this by drinking little to no liquids. There is a cultural misconception that LGBTQ+ individuals will pose a danger to other students, but the data do not reflect this. As a minority and marginalized community, queer youth are at all times the ones more likely to experience bullying, harassment, or violence in these spaces, which is reflected in hate crime data.

Simply allowing queer youth to exist in these spaces does not give them any special protections. If a queer student is inappropriate in these spaces, they will be punished according to whatever the policy and situation demand. Many recommendations for schools are to redesign rest rooms to allow more inclusivity and privacy. There are a good deal of resources for how schools can achieve this in our sections below.

Q10: Is the student able to use the locker room in correspondence to their gender identity?

Yes	21.6%
No	78.4%

Q10 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data from "Discrimination" - The Trevor Project. (2021). 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project

Suicide attempts for trans youth who did not experience discrimination were 12%

Suicide attempts for trans youth who experience discrimination were 24%

Suicide reduction by reducing experience of discrimination = 50%

21.6% of school districts allow students to use the locker room by their gender identity.

ND school districts are currently increasing suicides attempts by 78.4%

If all ND school districts had inclusive restroom practices, then total reduction in suicide attempts would be 43.9%

Q10 - Discussion

This question sought to understand how many schools allowed students to use the locker room according to their gender identity. While many schools were okay with using a preferred name and allowing bathroom access, only half as many schools allowed locker room access. With all items discussed here, the legality of using these spaces does currently favor transgender inclusion.

In 2020, according to Twin Cities Pioneer Press, "The Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled that schools must allow students to use locker rooms that are consistent with their gender identity, saying the Anoka-Hennepin School District violated the rights of a transgender student by keeping him from using the boys' main locker room."

There is a general perception that inclusion within these spaces will lead to widespread harassment, but this is not reflected in anything other than speculation and fear. While folks may hyperfixate on a few incidences of inappropriate behavior from LGBTQ+ individuals, this ignores the hundreds of thousands of times there isn't incidence from schools and states with LGBTQ+-inclusive policies. The truth is that queer students are the ones who avoid these spaces. According to GLSEN, "43.7% of LGBTQ+ students actively avoided locker rooms."

If they're avoiding the locker room entirely or are not allowed to use the correct locker room, this is extremely prohibitive for them participating in sports and by extension the health benefits of physical activity. This data is reflected in the ND Youth Risk Behavior Survey where we see queer youth engaging in much less physical activity.

A common misconception is that a boy can say they're a girl and simply walk into these spaces without consequences, because inclusive trans policies give total protections. This is not the case and the process of transitioning is often years in the making, with months of talking to parents and administrators to make sure the process is as smooth as possible. Further, many of these trans youth are now able to go through puberty in alignment with how they identify. From a secondary sexual characteristic perspective these youth will be indistinguishable from kids of the same gender. Many trans girls look like any other girl and vice versa. Often stereotypes surface about large burly men showering with little girls to increase anxiety and fear about trans inclusion. This is not the reality that plays out.

However, this is why it is so important to have a policy set in place, with clear guidelines to keep parents, students, and administration all on the same page. Typically this starts with a conversation with the student that addresses their expectations and creates a timeline for successful integration. Without these policies in place, a student may start attempting to use the locker room of their identified gender before any discussion happens, creating the very panic schools often hope to avoid by excluding or ignoring trans youth.

Further if any student harasses another student within the locker room they will be disciplined according, whether that student is transgender or not. Accommodations can be made to increase options for privacy for all students and any student can and should be able to opt into a gender-neutral setting if they're uncomfortable in gender-segregated spaces.

When students are denied access to these spaces they experience discrimination and this impacts their mental health and increases suicidality. We as a society are still growing and learning about what it means to be transgender or non-binary. We are still having difficult conversations where there are no perfect answers. When we engage in these topics we must approach them from the bottom up, in a way that respects the students and ensures equitable treatment.

While this question largely focused on transgender and non-binary students, GLSEN shows that all queer youth are avoiding these spaces. When we don't proactively work to insure marginalized students feel safe or included, they will feel neither.

Q11: Are there clear guidelines for teachers to use a child's preferred name and pronouns within class?

Yes	44.7%
No	55.3%

Q11 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data from "Discrimination" - The Trevor Project. (2021). 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project

Suicide attempts for trans youth who did not experience discrimination were 12%

Suicide attempts for trans youth who experience discrimination were 24%

Suicide reduction by reducing experience of discrimination = 50%

44.7% of school districts had guidance on using preferred name/pronouns within the classroom.

ND school districts are currently increasing suicide attempts by 55.3%

If all ND school districts had inclusive restroom practices, then total reduction in suicide attempts would be 35.6%

Q11 - Discussion

While question 8 identified if students were able to use preferred names, this question seeks to understand if staff are trained or given guidelines to use that preferred name in class. The data shows that approximately half of the schools surveyed did have some guideline that instructed teachers to use preferred names and pronouns. What is interesting is that Question 8 showed that 73.7% of school districts identified allowing children to use preferred names, but only 44.7% of school districts actually encouraged this to happen.

Teachers are more likely to use affirming names and pronouns if there are policies in place, which is why this question is important. Specifically, according to GLSEN, students in schools with affirming policies were "less likely to be prevented from using their name or pronoun of choice in school (18.8% vs. 44.9%)". While some of this can be explained by a school having an affirming policy being a safer and more inclusive environment already, some of it can be explained by empowering teachers to uphold best practices. Many teachers received their education on how to be a teacher decades ago, when no literature existed to help them traverse this current landscape or know the best way to do so.

When GLSEN asked teachers what prevented them from engaging in supportive practices they found, “over a quarter of teachers (26.2%) identified external pressures as barriers to engaging in LGBT efforts, such as lack of administrative support, or backlash from parents or community.” This also included fear of losing a job for engaging in these practices. Some teachers also felt it was inappropriate to engage in these behaviors, and others reported not having clear information on how to do so. All of which contribute to students being more likely to be misgendered or discriminated against due to their gender identity. Incidentally, it was teachers with more years of experience who were more empathetic and comfortable intervening when hearing hostile LGBTQ+ remarks.

While we know the results of intentionally misgendering a student is severe psychological harm, when this becomes institutionalized discrimination the damage it can do is even higher. As with the other questions, this question only sought to understand if there was formal instruction in place. Schools could be using affirming pronouns for students without being instructed to, so answering no to this question doesn’t mean 55.3% of schools are misgendering or deadnaming their students. However, for these schools, without structural policy informing expectations, students and teachers are set up to fail.

With all of the data we’ve collected here, this again can help point to the horrible outcomes we are seeing for our queer youth in this state.

Q12: Are there clear guidelines or instructions for transgender athletes

Yes	32.4%
No	71.7%

Q12 - Comparative Data Analysis

Data from “Discrimination” - The Trevor Project. (2021). 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project

Suicide attempts for trans youth who did not experience discrimination were 12%
 Suicide attempts for trans youth who experience discrimination were 24%
 Suicide reduction by reducing experience of discrimination = 50%

32.4% of school districts had guidance on trans athletes.
 ND school districts are currently increasing suicide attempts by 90.1%
 If all ND school districts had inclusive restroom practices, then total reduction in suicide attempts would be 47.0%

Q12 - Discussion

This question asked if there was any specific policy related to trans youth in sports participation. The majority of school districts who answered yes to this question, quoted the North Dakota High School Activity Association’s policy on the matter.

Their policy was written in 2015 and states the follow:

A transgender student will be defined as a student whose gender identity does not match the sex assigned to him or her at birth. Any transgender student who is not taking hormone treatment related to gender transition may participate in a sex-separated interscholastic contest in accordance with the sex assigned to him or her at birth.

The following clarifies participation in sex-separated interscholastic contests of transgender students undergoing hormonal treatment for gender transition:

A trans male (female to male) student who has undergone treatment with testosterone for gender transition may compete in a contest for boys but is no longer eligible to compete in a contest for girls.

A trans female (male to female) student being treated with testosterone suppression medication for gender transition may continue to compete in a contest for boys but may not compete in a contest for girls until completing one calendar year of documented testosterone-suppression treatment.

While transgender participation within sports has been made into a political issue, top experts in medical science denounce the exclusion of transgender individuals from playing in spaces that match their gender identity. Further education and research is compiled within our Supplemental Education section, but in terms of relevance to this report we find that LGBTQ+ youth are much less physically active than their peers. Specifically, LGB youth participated in sports approximately 28.1% fewer hours than straight youth. They are more than twice as likely to report zero days of the week where they've gotten at least 60 minutes of exercise. Queer youth and straight youth were shown to be equally enrolled in physical education classes -- meaning this disparity is seen entirely outside of the required physical education.

While this doesn't relate to trans youth here, 47.3% of LGBTQ+ individuals avoid locker rooms entirely and this impacts their participation within sports. Having clear and affirming instructions for trans athletes and expectations for locker room behavior set by school staff would create a safer environment in these spaces, increase participation within sports, and make physical activity more accessible for these students.

GLSEN has found that "For all students, having the opportunity to participate in sports results in positive outcomes, including physical development, social skills, and psychological well-being. The psychological benefits of sports specifically include improved emotional regulation, decreased hopelessness and suicidality, fewer depressive symptoms, and higher self-esteem. Research has also found that sports participation is related to greater feelings of school belonging and pro-school behaviors."

How to Achieve Better Outcomes Within ND

North Dakota School Board Association: has worked on and drafted a model LGBTQ+ Inclusive Policy for ND District School Boards to utilize. Contact this organization directly to learn how to access this policy. Otherwise, specific policies and templates that are currently being used by schools can be found further down.

- (<https://policy.ndsba.org>)

GLAAD: has put together a reference guide for all basic terminology with standardized definitions for each term and label.

- (<https://www.glaad.org/reference>)

GLSEN: has everything one can need for information around pronouns, coming out, utility resources for professionals, training, and so on.

- (<https://www.glsen.org/resources>)

Gender Spectrum: has comprehensive resources for youth, parents, educators, and so much more on all topics one could think about.

(<https://www.genderspectrum.org/>)

Professional Organization Policy Guidelines on LGBTQ+/Trans Students

- School Boards
 - <https://www.nsba.org/ASBJ/Past-Issues/June/Understanding-transgender-students>
- Principals
 - <https://www.nassp.org/top-issues-in-education/position-statements/transgender-students/>
- School Counsellors
 - <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-LGBTQ-Youth>
- Teachers
 - <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/legal-guidance-transgender-students-rights>
- High School Associations
 - <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/transgender-students-participation-in-school-sports-access-to-facilities/>

Professional Development Training for ND K12 Schools

Dakota Outright..... <http://dakotaoutright.org/css/>

Community Uplift Program..... <https://www.communityupliftprogram.org/contact-3>

Minnesota Outfront <https://www.outfront.org/training>

GLSEN..... <https://www.glsen.org/professional-development>

Comprehensive Anti-Bullying/Harassment Model Policies

Local Example: Grand Forks Public Schools

- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1imWwRVucbYwdGjgMINxhx54FJdswEJwt/view>

Local Example: West Fargo Public Schools

- <https://www.west-fargo.k12.nd.us/cms/lib/ND02203445/Centricity/domain/122/policiesforms/administrativepolicy/f-students/Transgender%20Students.pdf>

Regional Example: Saint Paul Public Schools

- <https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/domain/1240/board%20policies/sect%20iv%20-%20staff/415.00.1%20Harassment%20Violence%20and%20Other%20Offensive%20Behavior.pdf>

Comprehensive Transgender/Nonbinary Model Policies

Local Example: West Fargo Public Schools

- <https://www.west-fargo.k12.nd.us/cms/lib/ND02203445/Centricity/domain/122/policiesforms/administrativepolicy/f-students/Transgender%20Students.pdf>

Regional Example: Saint Paul Public Schools

- https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/1254/gender_inclusion_policy_final_v3_17_15.pdf

National Examples:

- <https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/383/BUL-6224.2%20Transgender%20Policy%205%2013%2019.pdf>
- <https://www.hrc.org/resources/schools-in-transition-a-guide-for-supporting-transgender-students-in-k-12-s>

Transgender Sports Policy:

- https://ndhsaa.com/files/2015_16_Board_and_Committees/NDHSAA_Transgender_Student_Board_Regulation.pdf

School LGBTQ+ Utility Resources for Teachers/Administrators

- GSA (Gender Sexuality Alliances).....<https://gsanetwork.org/>
- ND GSA Network.....Email: fayeseidler@gmail.com
- Inclusive Curriculum Support<https://www.glsen.org/inclusive-curriculum>
- Educator Resources.....<https://www.glsen.org/resources/educator-resources>
- LGBTQ+ Sexual Health Education.....<http://3rs.org/3rs-curriculum>

Enhancing Perspective (Webinar)

- <https://maec.org/webinar/thriving-not-just-surviving-centering-the-needs-of-transgender-and-non-binary-students-at-school/>

Redesigning Bathrooms

- https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/domain/13146/inclusive%20restrooms/20200106_Inclusive_WhitePaper_CGA.pdf

The Case for Including LGBTQ+ Topics in Elementary School

- https://www.aft.org/ae/spring2019/hermann-wilmarth_ryan

LGBTQ+ Reading List by Grade

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F0ZK5dm-HA6vNRFEMu7FbwDmNcC15tFbjtqwxMMXux4/edit?usp=sharing>

Elementary School Teachers Resource List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflection Press – Poster, Book, and other resources ○ AMAZE – video lessons about puberty and respect (ally video) ○ Advocates for Youth: Rights, Respect, and Responsibility (3Rs) – lesson plans around sexual and reproductive health as well as harassment, bullying [older students] ○ Welcoming Schools – books and lesson plans for elementary ○ Anti-defamation League – books and lesson plans for elementary ○ AMAZE Works (used at EXPO) – available LGBTQ+ affirming and inclusive program includes teacher professional development as well as classroom materials within a much larger frame

School LGBTQ+ Utility Resources for Parents

- Comprehensive Pamphlet for Family/Parents
 - <https://lgbtrc.usc.edu/files/2015/05/Welcoming-Our-Trans-Family-and-Friends.pdf>
- Religion and LGBTQ+ Identity
 - <https://www.mykidisgay.com/blog/2019/8/23/christianity-amp-parenting-trans-kids>
 - <http://fmpride.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2020/08/LGBTQIA-Affirming-Interfaith-Resources-2020.pdf>
 - <https://www.goodfruitproject.com/>
- Parental Support Groups
 - Bismarck: <https://pflagbismarck.org/>
 - Fargo: <https://www.projectraifm.org/>
 - Fargo: <https://www.facebook.com/ParentsLGBTQKidsFargoMoorhead>
 - Grand Forks: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/832707740781547/>
 - Online: <https://www.genderspectrum.org/audiences/parents-and-family>
 - Online: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/support4teenlgbtparents>
- Transgender/Non-Binary Education
 - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Guide-to-Being-an-Ally-to-Transgender-and-Nonbinary-Youth.pdf>
- Message for ND Parents
 - <https://www.kxnet.com/video/raising-north-dakota-raising-a-transgender-child/>
 - <https://www.kxnet.com/news/local-news/raising-north-dakota-raising-a-transgender-child-part-ii>
 - <https://www.kxnet.com/news/raising-north-dakota-raising-a-transgender-child-part-iii>
- Books for Parents of Queer/Non-Binary kids
 - <https://welcomingschools.org/resources/gender-identity-and-children-books-to-help-adults-understand>

School LGBTQ+ Utility Resources for LGBTQ+ Youth

- Emergency Services
 - LGBTQ+ Youth Suicide (866) 488-7386 <http://www.thetrevorproject.org>
 - Rape and Abuse (701) 293-7273 <https://www.raccfm.com>
 - Homelessness (701) 255-6909 <http://youthworksnd.org>
- Community Support Groups
 - Minot:
 - Magic City Equality: <https://www.magiccityequality.com> | Email: magiccityequality@gmail.com
 - Bismarck:
 - PFLAG: <https://pflagbismarck.org> | Email: PFLAGbismarck@gmail.com
 - QSpace: <https://www.facebook.com/qspacebismarck> | Email: dakotaoutright@gmail.com
 - Fargo:
 - Project RAI: <https://www.projectraifm.org> | Email: Projectraifm@gmail.com
 - Evolve: <https://youthworksnd.org/> | Email: Dlara@youthworksnd.org
 - Online
 - <https://www.qchatspace.org/>
- Identity
 - Gender Spectrum: <https://genderspectrum.org/articles/understanding-gender>
 - Gender Book: <https://thegenderbook.com/>

Supplemental Education

According to a Pew research study, less than half of Americans personally know someone who is transgender. This means the majority of Americans are getting their information on what it means to be transgender from non-transgender sources. A good deal of this information can be presented as people's thoughts or feelings on what being transgender is without personal experience or regard for the science, data, or research we have into outcomes for these youth. This section covers three of the biggest cultural misconceptions currently surrounding queer youth.

We must acknowledge that in North Dakota there are many folks who are very hostile towards LGBTQ+ individuals for a variety of reasons that can stem from culture to politics to religion. This hostility is often rooted in fear or misinformation. It is very important in these discussions to center ourselves in data-driven research, harm reduction, and ethics. We must try to put aside our feelings and our opinions to look at what's really best for these youth. Diverse sexual orientation and gender identity is a natural part of human life that has been seen in cultures throughout the world for much of recorded history. There are LGBTQ+ individuals in every political party, in every state, within every religion and every school. These are individuals who deserve the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in this state.

What we are going to do here is provide very detailed information around some primary concerns we hear from parents related to trans healthcare, trans participation in sports, and how religion and queer identity intersects. It is important to understand that many folks who are vocal with this hostility haven't had many opportunities to learn about queer identity growing up in North Dakota. Many folks in this state have been raised in a culture that has extremely negative messaging around being queer. It takes time to learn and grow. Nobody changes their mind overnight, and it can be difficult for a person to hear they're wrong about the things they've spent their entire life believing. Conversations should be opportunities to listen to and address concerns, as well as be opportunities to invite people to learn more about the topic while providing relevant information on data-driven research and best practices.

Transgender Youth's Healthcare

In 1919, the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute of Sex Research) opened its doors in Germany. This was a place that provided care to transgender individuals over a hundred years ago. In America, Harry Benjamin started treating Christine Jorgenson in the 1950s and later published a medical textbook with this research called *The Transsexual Phenomenon*. Transgender medicine is not new. We have been researching and studying this longer than most people have been alive. It is through decades of research that we understand being transgender to have a biological origin, is likely a function of our neuro-anatomy, and develops around age three. (1) (2)

The vast majority of individuals have no idea what trans medical care looks like or the decades-long history we draw from. According to a recent Gallup poll, the majority of individuals have never personally interacted with someone who is transgender. (3) This means national discourse is largely created by people's opinions and feelings on the topic, and that is far removed from actual medical practices, history, or consensus. These are folks attempting to apply their common sense and worldview to a topic they really don't have any good information about. According to that same Gallup poll, when folks actually interact with and know a transgender person, they are much more likely to support inclusive policies, because they're less likely to be misinformed on these subjects.

Misconception 1: Aren't kids too young to know?

Transgender kids' sense of their gender identity is as strong as non-trans youths. (2) Also, this question completely disregards how we treat non-trans kids. When a child identifies as the sex they were assigned at birth, we don't question that, we don't say they're too young to know. When we insist kids cannot know their gender identity, what we are doing is effectively saying no kid can be trans and thereby forcing all kids to go through their natal puberty, which can be extremely damaging to youth who are transgender.

Misconception 2: Kids are influenced into identifying as transgender

One may ask, but can't gender identity be contagious? Or trick young girls into identifying as boys to escape sexism? Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria was a single study which only asked parents how they felt about their youth. The study's participants were pooled largely from websites of parents who were skeptical or hostile towards trans identity. It didn't question youth at all, didn't look into medical treatment or diagnosis from a qualified mental health provider, nor did it follow up on this. (4) This study then blew up in social circles, that were very biased towards transgender identity, as definitive proof that this identity is just a fad that was being influenced by social media and was harmful. It was shared widely and uncritically within these circles. The study ultimately resulted in books like "Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing our Daughters," with the central conceit that trans healthcare for youth is reckless or dangerous. This is a position that the medical community at large denounces. (5) The vast amount of research points in one direction, that social acceptance, allowing youth to explore identity, and puberty blockers/hormone therapy when appropriate are our best models to ensure youth can be happy and thrive as who they are. (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11)

What is important here is medical consensus. A person can look for the answers they want to find and come up with a half a dozen studies that support that conclusion, while ignoring the several thousand that refute it. The author of this report goes to transgender health conferences to learn the most cutting-edge information we have; and as healthcare workers or advocates our goal is improving health. Nobody in this field wants to trick or force more people into being transgender, we want the people who are transgender to have the resources and tools to live their best life. No therapist is going to see a child who presents with depression and anxiety and immediately jump to hormone therapy. These decisions are made carefully, over time, and with the best information possible to make sure the decision's benefits outweigh the risks. While some people will regret it, while some will be confused, no medical decision comes with 100% certainty. If a heart surgery had a 99% chance of success and the consequence of not doing it was death, we'd do that surgery every time. We will do our due diligence to make sure that the patient is healthy, that we can mitigate all the risks associated with treatment, but it's absurd to mistreat the vast majority of patients given the data we have.

And we cannot stress enough that there are thousands of pages of medical literature on this subject. We are summarizing here after spending hundreds of hours reading over these reports, listening to medical experts, and hearing from the trans community at large; but the content and research can and does fill books. The American Academy of Pediatrics, which has 67,000 members, strongly supports affirming trans youth. (12) In contrast, the big name in skepticism towards these positions is a 200 member anti-LGBTQ+ group called American College of Pediatricians (13).

Misconception 3: Most kids detransition.

They don't. Most statistics stating the kids grow out of it based on very outdated studies and/or they weren't looking at trans youth at all. Detransition rates are currently estimated to be approximately less

than 1% and the reasons for it tend to be due to discrimination or societal pressures and not regret or confusion about identity when we account for youth who persistently say they want to be the opposite sex. (14) The most tragic part about this is that family rejection can drastically increase suicidality. (15) It is natural for kids to explore identity and roles, this may mean exploring being transgender. This doesn't mean the kid necessarily will transition or want to transition, but when they talk about this and they are rejected, angrily questioned, or denied, that can be very harmful regardless if they end up being trans or not.

How Therapy Plays Out for Gender Dysphoria

“When children and teens come to a therapy office visit, I first meet with them and their family to discuss concerns, strengths and what they are hoping to have go better in their lives. I listen carefully to their history, life stressors, and how they have responded to difficult times. I explore symptoms of anxiety and depression or if the client may meet criteria for a mental health diagnosis. Sometimes families come to me because their child or teen has questions about their gender, peer relationships, and developmental struggles.

There is so much to explore when it comes to your identity. What part of who you are is tied to your gender and what parts outside of your gender define your personality, interests, and self? Gender identity exploration helps clients better understand how their sense of gender developed. They then can explore the wide diversity of how people can choose to express their gender.

Most importantly, clients can focus on the multitude of identities we all have (ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, and so on) that form who we are as a unique and whole person. Therapy provides a supportive professional who can help the person decide how to consider their social, interpersonal, and familial support before deciding how to test what they are wanting and what is going to make them happy.

Therapy can also help individuals prepare for and navigate reactions that aren't completely supportive. The National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, The Trevor Project, uncovered that of the young people who identified as trans or nonbinary, more than half said they strongly considered ending their lives. For some individuals, slow exploration around gender and identity may lead to a consultation where parents and the client explore medically necessary interventions such as hormone therapy to bring life-saving relief by aligning the person's body and brain. For others, the core need of being understood and being allowed to express themselves to others in their life is healing.”

Kathryn Dahlstrom McGregor, MS, LMFT

Summary

Most parents are simply concerned about their kid and they can be fearful if their kid starts identifying as transgender, because they know how unsafe the world is for transgender people. Parents can also have a lot of emotional attachment to their kid being their daughter or son and be afraid of losing that image and that future they imagined.

The world is a different place than when we grew up. Trans kids, with supportive families, can be happy, can find love, and grow up to achieve their dreams. It is very important to focus these conversations on what will be the best for the kid.

Few kids just automatically know what is going to be right for them, it's a difficult journey of self-discovery, but we do get innate feelings that something may be wrong or something might work better for us. If you listen to nothing else here and if your kid starts exploring this, look at therapy to see what's going on and what the best approach may be.

If you're a professional, do more research into your field as an educator, therapist, or administrator. There is mountains of research, policy, and data showing the best outcomes for youth and a responsibility to achieve those and do no harm. (16)

Learn More About Trans Healthcare

1. <https://www.endocrine.org/advocacy/position-statements/transgender-health>
2. <https://scihub.wikicn.top/10.1073/pnas.1909367116>
3. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/350174/mixed-views-among-americans-transgender-issues.aspx>
4. <https://psychcentral.com/lib/there-is-no-evidence-that-rapid-onset-gender-dysphoria-exists/>
5. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/political-minds/202012/new-book-irreversible-damage-is-full-misinformation>
6. <https://jme.bmj.com/content/46/5/295>
7. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/137/3/e20153223.full.pdf>
8. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32273193/>
9. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2012-08120-008>
10. https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2015-03/tes-sdc030615.php
11. <https://sciencebasedmedicine.org/abigail-shriers-irreversible-damage-a-wealth-of-irreversible-misinformation/>
12. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/4/e20182162>
13. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/american-college-pediatricians>
14. <https://epath.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Boof-of-abstracts-EPATH2019.pdf#page=139>
15. <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/lgbt.2015.0111>
16. <https://www.nd.gov/espb/professional-practices/code-ethics>

Transgender Youth Sports Participation

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) released a 38 page report on their rationale behind including trans athletes. This policy was crafted with a number of leading experts in sports policy who took the medical, ethical, legal, and social considerations into play before making an equitable decision.(1)

“Transgender girls who medically transition at an early age do not go through a male puberty, and therefore their participation in athletics as girls does not raise the same equity concerns that arise when transgender women transition after puberty. Transgender women display a great deal of physical variation, just as there is a great deal of natural variation in physical size and ability among non-transgender women and men. Many people may have a stereotype that all transgender women are unusually tall and have large bones and muscles. But that is not true. A male-to-female transgender woman may be small and slight, even if she is not on hormone blockers or taking estrogen. It is important not to overgeneralize. The assumption that all male-bodied people are taller, stronger, and more highly skilled in a sport than all female-bodied people is not accurate.

It is also important to know that any strength and endurance advantages a transgender woman arguably may have as a result of her prior testosterone levels dissipate after about one year of estrogen or testosterone-suppression therapy. According to medical experts on this issue, the assumption that a transgender woman competing on a women's team would have a competitive advantage outside the range of performance and competitive advantage or disadvantage that already exists among female athletes is not supported by evidence.

Educators in collegiate athletics programs must develop thoughtful and informed practices that provide opportunities for all students, including transgender students, to participate in sports. These practices must be based on sound medical science, which shows that male-to-female transgender athletes do not have any automatic advantage over other women. These practices must also be based on the educational values of sport and the reasons why sport is included as a vital component of the educational environment: promoting the physical and psychological well-being of all students, and teaching students the values of equal opportunity, participation, inclusion, teamwork, discipline, and respect for diversity.”(2)

A systematic review of medical literature in 2017 found that “Currently, there is no direct or consistent research suggesting transgender female individuals (or male individuals) have an athletic advantage at any stage of their transition (e.g. cross-sex hormones, gender-confirming surgery) and, therefore, competitive sport policies that place restrictions on transgender people need to be considered and potentially revised.” (3) The key words being: “no direct or consistent research.”

The North Dakota American Academy of Pediatrics stated in testimony agreement with the systematic review in 2017 above and further stated, “Any disingenuous attempt to defend this law [Trans exclusions in sports] by suggesting otherwise [that science supports exclusion] is flatly contradicted by research.” (4)

Dr. Luis Casas, a pediatrician who who treats trans youth, shared that “In a study published in Science in 2018, Joanna Harper's research found that a nonelite group of eight transgender distance runners were no more competitive as women than as men. Her findings suggested that a performance advantage was not always maintained over cisgender women, as transgender women faced a reduction in speed, strength, endurance and oxygen-carrying capacity.” (5)

Regardless, Matt Fetsch, executive director of North Dakota High School Activity Association describes it as a non-issue in our state. According to research there are “16 states plus Washington, D.C., have transgender-inclusive statewide guidance and policies that allow students to participate and compete on teams in accordance with their gender identity without requiring the athlete to have undergone medical transition—meaning hormone therapy and/or gender confirmation surgery—or legal transition, such as by changing one's birth certificate or other legal documents, prior to competing. In supporting access to athletics based on gender identity, almost 42 percent of transgender high school-age youth nationwide—representing approximately 62,550 transgender students among more than 6.8 million high school-enrolled youth living in these states—have the same opportunity to participate in and benefit from sports as their cisgender peers”.(6)

Despite tens of thousands of trans athletes competing in states that allow inclusion, we don't see these athletes dominating. A highly cited example of trans youth winning are Terry Miller and Andraya Yearwood in Connecticut. ESPN did a comprehensive breakdown of this story, showcasing that while both of these girls did win some competition, they also lost a number of times as well. (7) Their top

times weren't even close to the world record held by non trans female youth athletes either. (8) It would stand to reason that if transgender youth had an advantage, we would see an overrepresentation of trans youth winning tournaments. What we see is far from that. We rarely see trans youth win, and when we do they are faced with harassment and extreme public scrutiny. (9) Miller and Yearwood are unlikely to continue competing in track due to these experiences.

As a final note, if we stopped focusing on just the concept of fairness in sports, there is also the aspect of community inclusion and mental health. GLSEN compiled national data looking at impacts of sports for LGBTQ+ youth, and by extension the consequences of being unable to participate and gain the benefits sports gives youth -- beyond this hyperfocus on top performance or scholarships that relatively few students even have access to.

“For all students, having the opportunity to participate in sports results in positive outcomes, including physical development, social skills, and psychological well-being. The psychological benefits of sports specifically include improved emotional regulation, decreased hopelessness and suicidality, fewer depressive symptoms, and higher self-esteem. Research has also found that sports participation is related to greater feelings of school belonging and pro-school behaviors. GLSEN’s research has shown that on a 4.0 scale, LGBTQ+ student athletes have a GPA that is 0.2 points higher than students who did not participate in athletics. LGBTQ+ team leaders have a GPA that is 0.4 points higher than their peers who did not participate in athletics. Further, 56% of LGBTQ+ team members and 66% of LGBTQ+ team leaders competing in high school sports report feeling a positive sense of belonging at school.” (10)

Learn More About Trans People in Sports

1. https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/inclusion/lgbtq/INC_TransgenderHandbook.pdf
2. On Transgendered Athletes, Fairness and Doping: An International Challenge,” Sport in Society: cultures, commerce, media, Politics, 1743-0445, Volume 9, Issue 2 (2006) Pages 227 – 251.
3. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5357259/>
4. https://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/67-2021/testimony/HHUMSER-1298-20210125-2497-A-S YVERSON_GRANT.pdf
5. https://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/67-2021/testimony/HHUMSER-1298-20210125-2420-A-C ASAS_LUIS.pdf
6. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/reports/2021/02/08/495502/fair-play/#fn-495502-38>
7. https://www.espn.com/espnw/story/_/id/29347507/the-battle-title-ix-gets-woman-sports-raging-national-debate
8. <https://www.runnersworld.com/news/a28147914/briana-williams-national-high-school-record-100-meters/>
9. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2015/feb/16/fallon-fox-trans-mma-athlete-interview>
10. <https://www.glsen.org/activity/gender-affirming-inclusive-athletics-participation>

Faith and LGBTQ+ Community

Religion is an important part of many North Dakotans’ life and belief structures, which includes many LGBTQ+ folks. While a person’s faith can be a deeply held, sincere belief about the world, there is a misconception the scripture definitively demands rejecting queer identity. Within Christianity, as an

example, there are over 200 denominations. How individuals come to believe or interpret their faith is up to them. (1)

A resource put together by the Human Rights Campaign has a listing of the different positions held by many faiths throughout the world. An example they have listed is for the United Church of Christ, "As early as 1969, the UCC voiced its commitment to civil rights for LGBTQ people. In 1975, the General Synod passed resolutions denouncing discrimination based in "affectional or sexual preference." By 2005, the Synod had passed a resolution that called "for an end to rhetoric that fuels hostility, misunderstanding, fear and hatred expressed toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons." The resolution further directed officers of the church to share that resolution with legislators at the local, state and national level. Recognizing that not all congregations would be in agreement, the Synod asked dissenting churches, "to engage in serious, respectful, and prayerful discussion," and provided a study guide to prompt healthy, responsible discussion. The General Synod of 2011 extended its focus on LGBTQ discrimination to encompass international concerns. According to the UCC website, "The message of love and compassion, justice and peace are at the very core of the life and ministry of Jesus. Open and Affirming ministries and resources are rooted in that Gospel message." (2)

While we used the United Church of Christ as an example, there are many others, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that has a "Reconciling in Christ " program requiring each RIC congregation to undergo a reconciliation project. There are also entries for Bhuddism, Judaism, Islam, and Hindusim.

How we understand our faith is often something in flux, something scholars and theologians debate. What this means is that there is often room for affirming and including someone who is part of the LGBTQ+ community. An individual does have options to question, explore, and find help in whatever their belief system may be. There is LGBTQ+ Affirming Interfaith Resources that is compiled every year, that includes all the affirming LGBTQ+ faith organizations in Fargo Moorhead. (3) While the rest of the state doesn't have an organized list, local community members often have suggestions. And while this isn't to say how someone comes to or believes their faith is wrong, it may be worth exploring one's faith to see if there is room to grow, question, and make an informed spiritual decision. The main point here is that there is a cultural perception that religion is opposed to LGBTQ+ identity and that is not true. There are certain groups who are antagonists and there are people within each faith who harbor hate, but these folks do not get to own everyone's belief.

One detailed blog to help some folks out has this to say:

"If you've recently found out that you're the parent of a transgender or gender-expansive child, you probably have a few questions. How can I keep my kid safe? What does it mean to be trans? What's up with pronouns, and why are they so important? Thankfully, more organizations are offering answers and providing support for families with trans youth, including My Kid Is Gay!

But if you're the parent of a trans kid and you also identify as Christian, you may have some more specific questions about how to understand trans identities as a person of faith. What does the Bible say about this? Will our church accept my child? Can I love God and support my trans kid at the same time? Many of these questions come with complicated answers—except for that last one. Spoiler alert: the answer is yes! (4)

As a final consideration we know that rejecting queer youth, especially trans youth, by not affirming their identity, name, or pronouns will increase depression, anxiety, and suicidality in this population (5). As a teacher, parent, or adult who is responsible for youth, it is very important to consider the impact words and actions will have on these youth. While these youth do have legal protections to be accepted for how they identify (6), we sincerely hope that individuals that are reading and utilizing this report to lower suicidality in this population can at the very least find some compromise between their beliefs and the safety of queer youth.

Learn More Faith Resources for LGBTQ+ Topics

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_denomination
2. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/faith-positions>
3. <http://fmpride.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2020/08/LGBTQIA-Affirming-Interfaith-Resources-2020.pdf>
4. <https://www.mykidisgay.com/blog/2019/8/23/christianity-amp-parenting-trans-kids>
5. [https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(18\)30085-5/abstract](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(18)30085-5/abstract)
6. <https://youtu.be/lGHtoBJMcgU>

LGBTQ+ School Climate Report Discussion

This school climate report is not perfect. We only gathered data from 20% of our school districts and extrapolated that data for the entire state. Regardless, school climate is not a thing one can simply dissect into its working components. The totality of the experiences our youth have add up into more than the sum of the parts we cover in this report.

The data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey is, however, extremely clear. We know that queer youth are disproportionately struggling in North Dakota and this report is the first effort that has ever been conducted in this state to examine why or offer solutions based on data. Not having a LGBTQ+ comprehensive bullying policy, staff training, or inclusive environments, increase the rate of victimizations; and local data shows our queer youth are being bullied at twice the rate of straight youth. Discrimination is shown to have an enormous impact on mental health and suicidality and our queer youth are experiencing significant hardships. Professional development training around LGBTQ+ topics increases affirming practices, which increases the support network for queer youth. In North Dakota, there is virtually no training and the majority of our queer youth have no adults they feel like they can turn to when feeling sad, empty, hopeless, or angry.

It is important to understand that being part of the LGBTQ+ community is not a lifestyle, because the life that queer individuals lead is extremely diverse and includes people of all faiths, political ideologies, and family backgrounds. It does not encourage promiscuous behavior as gay, lesbian, or bisexual sexual identity develops exactly the same as straight youth. And most importantly it is not a choice or something that can be cured. We have decades of research on the damage that is done by conversion therapy or the practice of trying to change someone's sexuality or gender identity. Further, it is not being part of the LGBTQ+ community that makes students more likely to be depressed, anxious, or suicidal - all data points to these issues arising from rejection, harassment, and social stigma. When these kids

are allowed to explore their identity, regardless of how they end up identifying, research shows they will do much better.

While this report focuses on queer youth, there are two important components we'd like to bring into the discussion here. The first is that our straight youth are also doing poorly on a number of outcomes related to mental health, bullying, and suicide. Of all the states who participated in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey we ranked fourth in highest attempted suicide for both middle school and high school students. The data shows that the bullying and harassment that impact LGBTQ+ youth also impact the straight youth who are either targeted or perceived to be queer. When we talk about these problems, it is important to understand they are impacting all students, not just our LGBTQ+ population.

Our youth of color are also struggling disproportionately and queer youth of color who experience the intersections of racism and queerphobia have even worse outcomes. There is a website that chronicles students' experiences of racism within school districts and it has over one hundred accounts of students talking about their experiences of being bullied and/or experiencing racism. This is not talking about critical race theory, this isn't a theory, this is the data we see in North Dakota and the lived experiences of our youth of color in our state. So, while this report does focus on LGBTQ+ youth, we acknowledge that all youth within this state are struggling and encourage advocating for better funding and mental health resources. School districts can get creative and partner to fund school psychologists that use online video platforms to provide resources to students covering large rural districts.

In terms of improving outcomes for queer youth, the most effective and cost-efficient method for school districts would be publicly identifying themselves and committing to being affirming and inclusive specifically to LGBTQ+ students. The biggest impact a teacher can make is saying it's okay to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. The biggest impact a parent can make is telling their child that they will love and support them no matter how that child identifies. Currently, our queer youth grow up with negative messaging around LGBTQ+ identity, that they internalize and never talk to adults about the problems going on in their life. If we can create the space for them to have safe conversations about their identity and their problems it would be game-changing.

The next best thing is providing research-based professional development training about LGBTQ+ identities to staff. Schools can either seek this out on an ongoing basis or teachers can work with entities like ND United to request this for continuing education credits. Schools or community advocates can also pursue funding or the budget to meet this demand directly through our government. While this can require significant funding, topics like anti-bullying policies or transgender-inclusive policies are accessible through the North Dakota School Board Association or the many resources we have listed within this document.

One important thing to realize is that the problems our queer youth face are not entirely the responsibility of our education system, nor within the scope of our education system alone to solve. Schools are often made into battlegrounds or scapegoats, but the reality is that we as a state are responsible for the youth who grew up here. It will require all of us to ensure queer youth can find support, resources, and the hope they need to survive. It is up to us to create the resiliency against those in our state who are hateful and wish to do harm.

This means this School Climate Report is not simply a static report, but also something that intentionally has a call to action for the folks who engage with this material. We actively want people to

email us after this is complete, with resources, information, or perspective that can make this report into something more than it is now.

We want quotes from principals or school superintendents about how inclusive measures have been implemented in their school. We want folks around the state to talk about and consider these issues and form their own task groups to create change in their area. We know that we don't have all the answers here, but this is the start to a conversation that is intended to be a dialogue with this entire state, because we can't afford that this report simply be in someone's email or sit on someone's desk. We can't afford that people read through this, think it's a real shame, and move on with their day. Our queer youth desperately need people to take action.

Call to Action

Based on the 2018 National Survey of Drug Use and Mental Health it is estimated that 0.5 percent of the adults aged 18 or older made at least one suicide attempt. The 2019 North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 33.3 percent of queer youth in North Dakota have attempted suicide. Our queer youth are over sixty times more likely to have attempted suicide than the general adult population. This is a crisis and we need help.

How You can Help

Everyone

- Advocate for inclusive policies highlighted in this report for suicide reduction within schools
- Share this report with anyone involved in k12 education, healthcare, and child advocacy
- Generate public discussion around how we can reduce suicidality for queer youth and improve support by newspaper articles, family talks, radio shows, and news channels
- Show up for and support schools engaging in queer youth suicide prevention efforts
- Have conversations with and provide education to your friends and family

Parents

- Tell your child that no matter who they love or how they identify, you love and support them.
- If a child is struggling, then try to find community support/mental health resources for them.
- Talk to your family about data presented here with an emphasis on education and offering opportunities to honestly discuss and address insecurities.

Teachers

- Advocate for LGBTQ+ professional development training
- Familiarize yourself with teacher specific resources within this report
- Share this with other colleagues, teachers, and peers - have discussions

School Administrators

- Create inclusive policies for LGBTQ+ suicide reduction within schools
- Make sure staff can have adequate training on LGBTQ+ topics
- Familiarize yourself with resources and policy guidelines within this report
- Share this with other school districts and administrators
- Complete a survey around policies for your district school if we don't have that information already. (Link - <https://vyla.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/minimalist/index.html>)

[?appid=0b6cb30758434a2cb1601e0479d2b0db\)](#)

How You can Improve This Report

This report will exist as a living resource through the 2021-2022 school year. We don't know everything and we highly encourage school professionals to contribute information they find useful; and for parents of queer youth and queer students to share their experiences to help shed light on all of the statistics represented here. If there are specific state or federal funds that will help schools achieve this, we can list them on this report. If you would like to make a contribution, share a particularly useful resource, or have spot mistakes made within this report - please email this report's author at fayeseidler@gmail.com. This report will be hosted, all updates included at <https://www.communityupliftprogram.org>.

*****Last Edited: 9/24/21*****