

Educator Rights

Massachusetts' anti-discrimination law:

- Prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression
- It forbids employers from refusing to hire a person, or discharging them, or discriminating against them "in compensation, or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment" because of sexual orientation or gender identity. This covers most significant job actions, such as hiring, firing, failure to promote, demotion, excessive discipline, harassment and different treatment of the employee and similarly situated co-workers.
- It is as unlawful to sexually harass a gay, lesbian or bisexual person as it is to harass a non-gay person. Some harassment is specifically anti-gay, and may be more fairly characterized as harassment on the basis of sexual orientation. Other harassment is sexual in nature and more appropriately categorized as "sexual harassment." Both types of harassment can happen to the same person, and both are forbidden.
- You may file a complaint in person or in writing at the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). The MCAD prefers for people to file in person, unless an attorney has prepared the complaint for them. Call in advance to set up an appointment and find out what you need to bring. Boston: (617) 994-6000, One Ashburton Place, Room 601, Springfield: (413) 739-2145, Worcester: (508) 799-8010
- For more resources, visit www.GLAD.org

Resources

BTU LGBTQ Organizing Committee

Meet fellow allies and advocates in the Boston Teachers Union by joining the list-serve and committee. Call the BTU at 617-288-2000 or visit www.btu.org to join and get more information.

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network): Massachusetts: an education organization working to improve school climate and champion LGBTQ issues in K-12 education

<http://www.glsen.org/massachusetts>

BAGLY (Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Youth): a youth-led support and social justice organization for LGBTQ youth in the Boston area

<http://www.bagly.org/>

Greater Boston PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of LGBTQ People): a group for families/friends of LGBTQ people providing support, education and advocacy

<https://www.gbpflag.org/>

Boston GLASS (Gay & Lesbian Adolescent Social Services): a community center serving LGBTQ youth

<http://www.jri.org/services/health-hiv-lgbtq-services/health-and-prevention-services/boston-glass/about-glass>

Sydney Borum Jr. Health Center: a Fenway Health program providing inclusive and non-judgemental health services to young people (ages 12-29)

<http://sidneyborum.org/>

HBGC (Hispanic Black Gay Coalition): a nonprofit organization working to empower LGBTQ people of color

<http://www.hbgc-boston.org/>



Did You Know?

Findings from the GLSEN 2013 National School Climate Survey demonstrate that Massachusetts schools were not safe for many LGBTQ secondary school students.

FACT:

The vast majority of LGBT students in Massachusetts regularly heard anti-LGBT remarks.

FACT:

Most LGBT students in Massachusetts had been victimized at school. The majority of these incidents were not reported to adult authorities.

FACT:

Many LGBT students in Massachusetts did not have access to in-school resources and supports.

Source: GLSEN. (2014). School Climate in Massachusetts (State Snapshot)

Student Voices



Marco

"One thing teachers can do to support me as a transgender student is talking to me and making sure that I'm comfortable and asking what I prefer or need in class."

"This year, I wrote an essay where I came out to my teacher. The teacher came up to me after and told me that she loved my paper, she totally supports me, and she wants to know more about the activism that I do. Knowing that I have a teacher on board really makes me feel safe in my school. Just having an ally is a weight lifted off my shoulders... just one person being on my side for what's right can make a huge difference."



Kriss

"When I was in middle school, my English teacher saw that I was being bullied, yet stood up for me by talking about bullying in class. She said that by being kind, we could find friends in those we least expected."



Gil

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I start making my classroom safe and supportive for all students?

One of the key ways to make a classroom safe and supportive is to be an ally to LGBTQ students in your school. The GLSEN Safe Space Kit describes the dos and don'ts of being an ally and four main ways you can be supportive:

- Be a visible ally
- Support students who come out to you
- Respond to anti-LGBT language and behaviors
- Support student clubs, such as Gay-Straight Alliances

What do I do if I hear students use hurtful language?

Educators can make a difference by intervening in anti-LGBTQ name-calling, bullying and harassment every time they witness it. Taking action when you see it occur can help create a safe space for all students. Intervening on the spot will also serve as a teachable moment to let other students know that anti-LGBTQ behavior will not be tolerated. One of the most effective things you can do as an ally is respond to anti-LGBTQ behavior.

How do I handle parents or coworkers who disagree?

Let other educators and parents know you're an ally for LGBTQ students. In an ideal world, all educators and parents would be supportive allies to LGBTQ students. But the reality is that you may be one of only a few at your school. Let others know that you are an ally and share with them the important role they too can play in supporting LGBTQ students.

Check out the Safe Space Kit, GLSEN's Guide to Being an Ally to LGBTQ Students for more details and practical tools to help you create a safe space for LGBTQ youth in schools:

<http://www.glsen.org/safespace>

Resources: GLSEN BTU: <http://www.glsen.org/massachusetts/btu>

Glossary

LGBTQ - An umbrella term referring to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender, queer and questioning. The acronym can also include additional letters, in reference to other identities that do not conform to dominant societal norms around sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Transgender - A person whose gender identity and/ or expression are not aligned with the gender they were assigned at birth. "Transgender" is often used as an umbrella term encompassing a large number of identities related to gender nonconformity

Gender - A set of cultural identities, expressions and roles - codified as feminine or masculine - that are assigned to people, based upon the interpretation of their bodies, and more specifically, their sexual and reproductive anatomy.

Gender Identity - How an individual identifies in terms of their gender. Gender identities may include "male," "female," "androgynous," "transgender," "genderqueer" and many others, or a combination thereof.

Gender Expression - The multiple ways (e.g., behaviors, dress) in which a person may choose to communicate gender to oneself and/or to others.

Sexual Orientation - The inner feelings of who a person is attracted to emotionally and/or physically, in relation to their own gender identity. Some people may identify as "asexual," "bisexual," "gay," "lesbian," "pansexual," "queer," "straight," and many more.

Queer - An umbrella term used to describe a sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to dominant societal norms. While it is used as a neutral, or often positive term among many LGBTQ people today, historically "queer" was used as a derogatory slur.