Key Findings of GLSEN’s 2011 National School Climate Survey

http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/2897.html

With their release of *The 2011 National School Climate Survey*; GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) celebrated 13 years of pioneering research by biannually documenting the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students.

In 2011, GLSEN surveyed 8,584 middle and high school students from all 50 states and D.C. on their student experiences, hostility within their school climate, and the effects on their educational outcomes and psychological well-being.

Because of their sexual orientation, in the past year at school:

- 81.9% reported being verbally harassed
- 38.3% reported being physically harassed
- 18.3% reported being physically assaulted
- 63.5% reported that they felt unsafe

Because of their gender expression, in the past year at school:

- 63.9% reported being verbally harassed
- 27.1% reported being physically harassed
- 12.4% reported being physically assaulted
- 43.9% reported that they felt unsafe

- 55.2% of LGBT students were harassed or threatened by their peers via electronic mediums (e.g., text messages, emails, instant messages or postings on Internet sites such as Facebook), often known as cyberbullying.

- 72.4% heard homophobic remarks, such as "faggot" or "dyke," frequently or often at school.

- 84.9% frequently or often heard “gay” used negatively (i.e. That’s SO GAY!!!)
  - 91.4% reported they felt distressed by this language

- 61.4% heard negative remarks about gender expression (not acting “masculine or feminine enough”)

- 56.9% heard homophobic and negative gender expression remarks from TEACHERS or other SCHOOL STAFF
• 29.8% of LGBT students missed a class at least once and 31.8% missed at least one day of school in the past month because of safety concerns, compared to only 8.0% and 6.7%, respectively, of a national sample of secondary school students.

• 60.4% of students who were harassed or assaulted in school did not report the incident to school staff, believing little to no action would be taken or the situation could become worse if reported.

• 36.7% of the students who did report an incident said that school staff did nothing in response.

• The reported grade point average of students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression was almost half a grade lower than for students who were less often harassed (2.9 vs. 3.2).

• Increased levels of victimization were related to increased levels of depression and anxiety and decreased levels of self-esteem. Being out in school had positive and negative repercussions for LGBT students – “outness” was related to higher levels of victimization, but also higher levels of psychological well-being.

• About 10.7% of students who experienced high levels of victimization because of their gender expression or their sexual orientation did NOT plan to continue their education, compared to about 5.1% of those who had experienced low levels of victimization.

WAYS TO HELP:
Schools with Gay Straight Alliances, LGBTQ-supportive faculty and staff, and LGBTQ inclusive curriculum had:
• Fewer students felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation or gender expression
• Fewer missed at least of day of school in the past month
• Heard less homophobic and transphobic remarks
• More classmates they considered somewhat or very accepting
• LGBTQ students had a greater sense of connectedness to their school community