

# STRATEGIC ISSUES BRIEF

*Supporting LGBT Youth*



movement advancement project ▶

*December, 2006*

## Movement Advancement Project

Launched in 2006, the LGBT Movement Advancement Project (MAP) is an independent, intellectual resource for LGBT organization executives and donors, funded by a small number of committed, long term donors to the movement. MAP's mission is to speed achievement of full social and political equality for LGBT people by providing donors and organizations with strategic information, insights and analyses that help them increase and align resources for highest impact. In short, MAP's purpose is to stimulate additional contributions to the LGBT movement, as well as additional productivity from those contributions. See [www.lgbtmap.org](http://www.lgbtmap.org) for more information on MAP.

## Strategic Issues Briefs

This report is one of a series of MAP strategic issue briefs. These briefs examine key issues facing the LGBT movement and aim to help funders and organizations put the issues in their current and long-term perspective, understand strategies for solving the problem, prioritize giving and action plans, and, ultimately, make the most effective use of limited resources. In addition, by outlining the broad scope of work underway to solve a specific issue, MAP hopes to spark both funders and organizations to think expansively and to collaborate with other funders and organizations working to solve the same problem.

The opinions expressed in this report reflect the best judgment of MAP and are based on extensive research and examination of the issue, including data gathering and analysis, review of current literature and media, numerous in-depth expert interviews, attendance at key conferences, etc.

MAP strategic issue briefs are based on a point in time and while MAP will periodically update the briefs, current events advance rapidly and, therefore, this report may not reflect the most recent changes in the landscape.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today's LGBT youth are growing up in an environment that is radically different from that faced by LGBT youth 20 or even ten years ago. On the positive side, American youth as a whole increasingly accept their LGBT peers; LGBT youth are coming out in unprecedented numbers; and some supportive infrastructure, such as Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs, is becoming commonplace in schools. On the other hand, however, as LGBT issues become more highly visible and politicized, LGBT youth face enormous hostility and opposition from conservative factions of society. LGBT youth suffer from a gaping lack of protections from school bullying; a social services and government infrastructure ill-equipped to work with them; and highly stressed families that often disown or perpetrate violence towards them.

This report provides an overview of the social and political events impacting LGBT youth, the organizations and strategies working to support them, and potential funding opportunities to strengthen current LGBT and allied youth work.

### Recent Events Increase the Urgency to Support LGBT Youth

#### *LGBT Youth Are Coming Out Much Earlier*

Compared to 30 years ago, youth are coming out as gay at much younger ages. In the 1970s, the average young person first became aware of same-sex attraction between ages 13 and 16. By 2005, that average had fallen to age ten. Similarly, in the 1970s the average person first self-identified as gay between ages 19 and 23, falling to age 13 by 2005. Thus in the 1970s, most LGBT people did not self-identify until after high school, when they had reached some level of emotional maturity and were living outside their parents' home. In contrast, youth today increasingly come out in high school or even middle school, while emotionally immature and financially reliant on their families.

#### *Schools and Social Services Are Ill-Equipped to Support Emerging LGBT Youth*

The phenomenon of youth coming out at earlier ages has caught the education and social services systems flat-footed. Suddenly, these systems are battlegrounds over LGBT rights with students, parents, clergy, activists, and litigators entering the fray. Beyond youth-serving institutions, the adults who surround LGBT youth – including their parents, coaches, youth pastors, principals, teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, juvenile justice officers, and many more – are often wholly unprepared for understanding, working with, and accepting LGBT youth as they come out of the closet.

In addition to coming out into a much more tumultuous political and social environment, LGBT youth are also coming out at a time when they are much more emotionally, mentally, and financially vulnerable. All teenagers – regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity – endure countless new social pressures, along with rapid physical and emotional changes, at this time of life. These challenges can be exacerbated by realizing that one's sexual orientation is different from that of one's peers. And although more LGBT youth are coming out at younger ages, they are still a small minority, often facing profound levels of isolation. Youth in schools or communities hostile to LGBT people might choose to remain closeted, living each day with the fear of discovery.

LGBT youth that choose to come out of the closet often face stigma, violence, and harassment. Daily harassment and constant threats to safety take a significant toll on LGBT students, who are much more likely than other students to engage in self-harmful activities such as using drugs, making suicide plans or attempting suicide, and getting pregnant or causing a pregnancy.

Many LGBT youth face rejection not just from their peers, but also from their families. An astounding 30 percent of all LGBT youth report suffering physical violence from their families, and 26 percent are forced to leave home because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Consequently, another response to the stress of being out (or even just being perceived to be gay) at such a young age is to run away from home. Recent data suggest that 42 percent of all LGBT youth who run away do so because of their LGBT identity, and that an astonishing 50 percent of all homeless youth are LGBT. Many end up living on the streets, where they often turn to sex work or theft to survive. Criminal activity leads to juvenile correctional facilities, where LGBT youth face new forms of harassment and abuse.

The alternative to homelessness is the foster care system or youth group homes, which are again generally ill-equipped or unwilling to integrate LGBT youth. For example, foster home intake workers may place LGBT youth with hostile foster families. In fact, nearly 80 percent of all LGBT youth in foster care experience some form of abuse, with 70 percent reporting violent abuse. Some foster care systems or families subject LGBT youth to anti-gay social service providers (such as a conservative Christian service provider) or even reparative or conversion therapy. Abusive or threatening foster care or group home experiences can also push LGBT youth to the streets, criminal behavior, and eventual placement in juvenile correction facilities.

## **Schools are Becoming Polarized Battlegrounds with the Religious Right**

The Religious Right has sounded the alarm over American youth's increasingly positive attitudes toward gay people and issues, as well as the LGBT movement's modest gains toward making schools hospitable to gay students. The Religious Right is deploying a range of tactics to counter any pro-LGBT youth work in schools, including first and foremost promoting the "truth" about homosexuality, which usually focuses on erroneous claims that homosexuality is a choice and that it can be overcome through reparative therapy, as evidenced by the "Ex-gay" movement. They have supported this message with media campaigns to defend (from their perspective) child health and safety, as well as religious freedom and the rights of "oppressed" Ex-gays.

The Religious Right's Ex-gay efforts have also responded to the earlier coming-out age of youth, increasingly targeting families and youth and calling attention to "prehomosexual" conditions in children, teaching parents how to "prevent" homosexuality among their children, and encouraging conversion therapy for youth who identify as LGBT. Contrary to all scientific evidence and the opinions of all mainstream psychological associations, Ex-gay groups claim that homosexuality can be "overcome" with counseling. Despite numerous scandals with Ex-gay leadership "falling back" into the "gay lifestyle," the Religious Right continues to put forward Ex-gay speakers and create new programs to "prove" that change is possible.

## **Understanding the Work Underway to Support LGBT Youth**

MAP has grouped the many efforts to support LGBT youth into four streams of work: helping youth manage LGBT identity development; creating a supportive environment in schools and on campuses; fighting the burgeoning Ex-gay movement; and creating inclusive child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

The first category, helping youth manage LGBT identity development, focuses on getting positive, factual information about LGBT identity and issues to both LGBT youth and their families. LGBT youth need accurate information that lets them know they can have personally, professionally, and spiritually fulfilling lives as LGBT teens and adults. Families of LGBT youth need both accurate facts about sexual orientation and an understanding of how their words, actions, and behaviors affect their LGBT children's physical and mental health. If they are willing, families of LGBT youth can learn how to protect and advocate for their LGBT children. Currently, almost all LGBT youth development services are local in scope and lack a national strategy.

On the national scene, forthcoming research from the César Chávez Institute's Family Acceptance Project has the potential to systematically link how LGBT youth are treated to their long-term risk levels. This in turn can provide valuable recommendations on how LGBT youth should be treated within their families, schools, the courts, and the foster care system because it will create a direct link between hostile behaviors towards LGBT youth and the harms they suffer as a result, and in contrast, what behaviors can most help LGBT youth. The research can provide the foundation for guiding parents and other adults in working through tough issues (for example, how a non-accepting family might better handle the coming out process in a way that keeps their child emotionally and physically safe), as well as to develop training and assessment materials for social service providers working with LGBT youth and families.

Second, work to create a supportive environment in schools and on campuses includes implementing policies and protections that help LGBT youth; mobilizing young people and the broader community to support LGBT youth in schools; and influencing school activities through training seminars for teachers and other staff members, using LGBT affirming curricula, and improving the overall school climate for LGBT youth.

Third, fighting the burgeoning Ex-gay movement is a relatively new but growing strategy. This strategy focuses primarily on dismantling myths about homosexuality propagated by the Ex-gay movement and exposing the severe harms that develop when trying to change something as innate as human sexuality.

The fourth strategy to help LGBT youth involves creating inclusive child welfare and juvenile justice systems, including implementing new social service delivery policies and practices, educating and training service providers about LGBT issues, and litigating to expand LGBT youth protections within these systems. The out-of-home LGBT youth field is very collaborative, involves many leading non-gay youth organizations, and could serve as a model for other issue areas related to LGBT youth.

## **Promising Avenues for Investment in Supporting LGBT Youth**

The LGBT youth services field involves very complex mental and physical health concerns, controversial political issues and players, and complicated service delivery systems. Not surprisingly, there are many opportunities for funders to support LGBT youth.

First, within the youth identity development area, funds are needed to support better research on LGBT youth. Getting LGBT issues included in state Youth Risk Behavior Surveys is one approach, as only a handful of states currently include questions related to sexual orientation, which have proven very helpful in advocating for additional protections and services for LGBT youth in those states. Another possibility is funding the completion of the Family Acceptance Project, including messaging and dissemination of research, as well as training materials for parents and service providers. This would provide an important counter to the Religious Right as the main source of aid and advice for non-accepting parents.

Second, funding opportunities related to safe and supportive schools include strengthening state GSA networks (e.g., groups in 15 states have asked for help in adopting the California GSA Network model, which organizes and trains GSA members), creating new safe schools coalitions in key states, providing technical assistance in community organizing to parents and communities, and providing LGBT training to future teachers in targeted teaching colleges.

Third, a basic strategy for countering the ex-gay movement is needed, including research, media and communications training, specific messaging, and general talking points.

Finally, LGBT youth work around child welfare and juvenile justice systems could be strengthened and expanded through an infusion of more general operating support grants. As young people come out at younger ages, the demands for services will likely continue to increase. Investing in these systems now could benefit many LGBT youth in the future.

## Conclusion

Supporting LGBT youth is a sound investment for funders committed to advancing LGBT equality. LGBT youth face many opportunities and challenges right now, whether coming out to their families or peers at an earlier age or dealing with attacks from the Religious Right. The systems and organizations that support LGBT youth and their families need to be strengthened to help these youth overcome today's challenges, take full advantage of current and future opportunities, and grow into healthy, happy, and responsible adults. The future of LGBT youth depends on it, as does the future of the LGBT movement.

## 1. RECENT EVENTS INCREASE THE URGENCY TO SUPPORT LGBT YOUTH

Between 3 to 5 percent of youth self-identify as LGBT or report same sex activity,<sup>1</sup> while almost 6 percent of youth report experiencing same sex attraction<sup>2</sup>. Assuming an average figure of 4 percent of youth self-identifying as LGBT means that, as the United States hits a population of 300 million, there are about 2.1 million LGBT youth aged ten to 19.

Today's LGBT youth are growing up in an environment that is radically different than that faced by LGBT youth 20 or even ten years ago. On one hand, LGBT issues are highly visible and politicized, LGBT people face enormous hostility and opposition from conservative factions of society, and LGBT youth face a gaping lack of protections from school bullying, a social services and government infrastructure ill-equipped to work with them, and families that often disown or exhibit violence towards them. On the other hand, outside of extreme right-wing political forces, American youth as a whole are becoming increasingly accepting of their LGBT peers, LGBT youth are coming out in unprecedented numbers, and some supportive infrastructure, such as Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs, is becoming commonplace in schools, whereas they would have been unheard of 20 years ago.

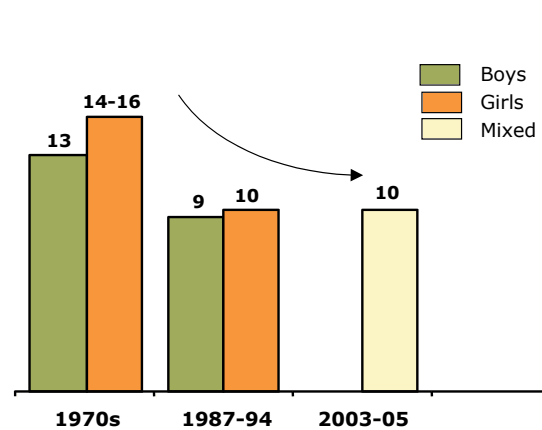
These gains by LGBT youth have not gone unnoticed by opponents who have reacted in a swift, coordinated fashion with campaigns to turn the tide of supporting youth and attempts to establish legal and institutional barriers that harm LGBT youth. While much of this report focuses on addressing the specific challenges faced by LGBT youth as they attempt to make a safe and healthy transition into adulthood, the need to create supportive environments, policies, laws, and institutions is also a critical component of winning the hearts and minds of American youth in general. The importance of ensuring the next generation of voters and activists is fair-minded and supportive cannot be understated.

### LGBT Youth are Coming Out at Earlier Ages

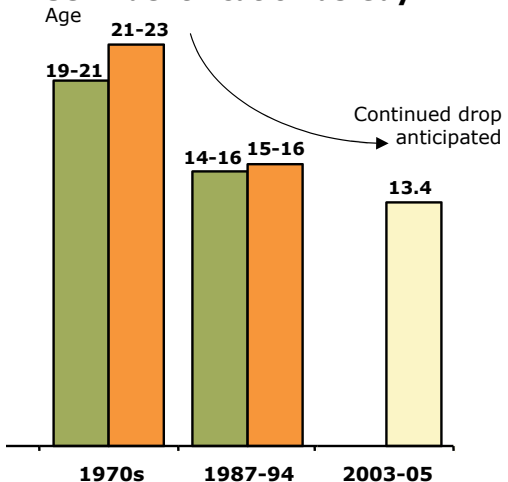
Compared to 30 years ago, youth are coming out as gay at much younger ages. As the figure to the right shows, in the 1970s, the average young person first became aware of same-sex attraction between ages 13 and 16. By 2005, that average had fallen to age ten. Similarly, in the 1970s the average person first self-identified as gay between ages 19 and 23, falling to 13 by 2005. (See Figure 1) Most experts agree that both measures will continue to drop in the near-term. These figures may only seem mildly interesting until they are translated into their impact on the youth and the systems that surround them. In the 1970s, most LGBT people were not self-identifying as such until they were in their early 20s, at

Figure 1: Youth are Coming Out Earlier

#### First Awareness of Same-sex Attraction



#### Self-Identification as Gay



Source: Studies reviewed by Caitlin Ryan (Trolden, 1988; D'Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Herdt & Boxer, 1993; Rosario, et al., 1996; and Ryan & Diaz, 2005).

which point they would have completed high school, likely been either employed or in college, and for the most part, living outside their parents' home. Compare that to 2006, when youth are coming out in late middle school or early high school, when they are in the middle of their chaotic teens, and when they are dependent on their parents for food, shelter, clothing, and emotional support.

This phenomenon of youth coming out at earlier ages has also caught the education and social services systems flat-footed. Suddenly, schools are becoming battlegrounds over LGBT and other related issues, with students, parents, politicians, and litigators entering the fray. Beyond youth-serving institutions, the individual adults who surround LGBT youth

<sup>1</sup>The 2001 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Study (5 percent self-identify as LGBT or report same-sex activity) and the 2001 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Study (3 percent engage in same-sex activity).

<sup>2</sup>The 1996 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, youth 13-18.

– including their parents, coaches, youth pastors, principals, teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, juvenile justice officers, and many more – are often wholly unprepared for understanding, working with, and accepting LGBT youth as they come out of the closet. A non-accepting family faces a whole different paradigm when their 13-year-old daughter comes out as a lesbian while living at home, than when their daughter comes out at 22 while living in a different state and attending college.

In addition to coming out in a much more tumultuous political and social environment, LGBT youth are also coming out at a time when they are much more emotionally, mentally, and financially vulnerable. All teenagers – regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity – endure countless new social pressures, as well as rapid physical and emotional changes, at that time of life. These challenges can be exacerbated by realizing that one’s sexual orientation is different from that of one’s peers. And although more LGBT youth are coming out at younger ages, they are still a small minority, often facing profound levels of isolation. Youth in schools or communities hostile to LGBT people might choose to remain closeted, living each day with the fear of being discovered. LGBT youth that choose to come out of the closet often face stigma, violence, and harassment. For example, compared to their non-LGBT peers, LGBT youth are much more likely to report being harassed at school, having their personal property stolen or damaged, being threatened with a weapon, or skipping school because they feel unsafe. (See Figure 2)

This daily harassment and constant threat to safety have taken a significant toll on LGBT students, who are much more likely than other students to engage in self-harmful activities such as using drugs, making suicide plans or attempting suicide, and getting pregnant or causing a pregnancy. (See Figure 3)

Many LGBT youth face rejection not just from their peers,

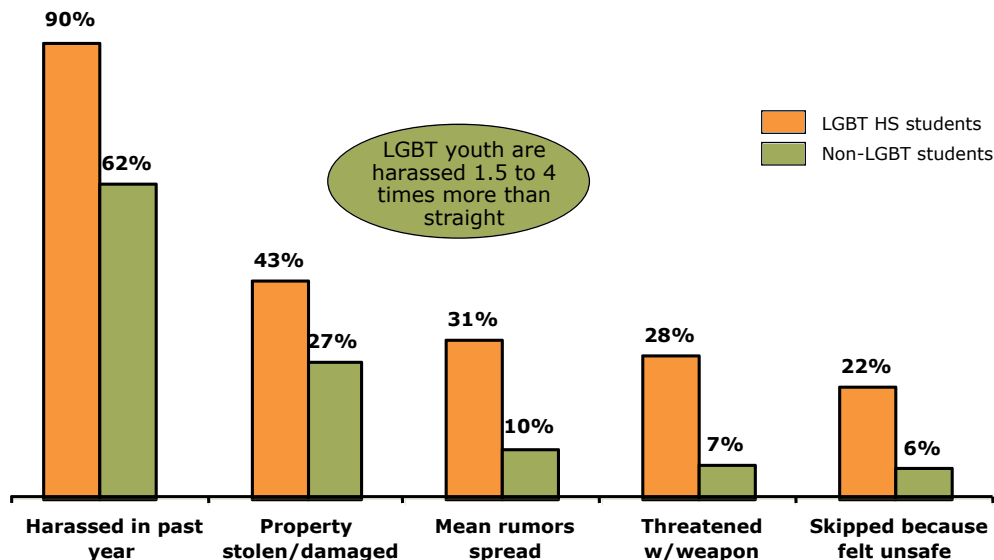
but also from their families. In fact, an astounding 30 percent of all LGBT youth report suffering physical violence from their families, and 26 percent are forced to leave home because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Consequently, another response to the stress of being out (or even simply being perceived to be gay) at such a young age is to run away from home. Recent data suggest that 42 percent of all LGBT youth who run away do so because of their LGBT identity, and that 50 percent of all homeless youth are LGBT. (See Figure 4)

Once LGBT youth run away, their options are often grim. Many end up living on the streets, where they may turn to sex work or theft to survive. This criminal activity could lead to LGBT youth being sent to juvenile correctional facilities, where they face new forms of harassment and abuse. These include being subjected to ridicule, harassment, and violence from both other youth and the staff; being housed in isolation; being inappropriately disciplined for age-appropriate conduct such as kissing a peer; being misclassified as sex offenders; or being forced to undergo conversion therapy.

The alternative to homelessness is the foster care system or youth group homes, which are again often ill-equipped or unwilling to integrate LGBT youth. Ridicule, harassment, and violence might also occur in these facilities, and foster home intake workers may place LGBT youth with hostile foster families. Nearly 80 percent of all LGBT youth in foster care experience some form of abuse, with 70 percent reporting violent abuse. (See Figure 5) Some foster care systems or families subject LGBT youth to anti-gay social service providers (such as conservative Christian service providers) or even reparative or conversion therapy.

Abusive or threatening foster care or group home experiences can once again push LGBT youth to the streets or to criminal behavior and eventual placement in juvenile correction facilities.

**Figure 2: LGBT Students Face Much More Harassment at School**



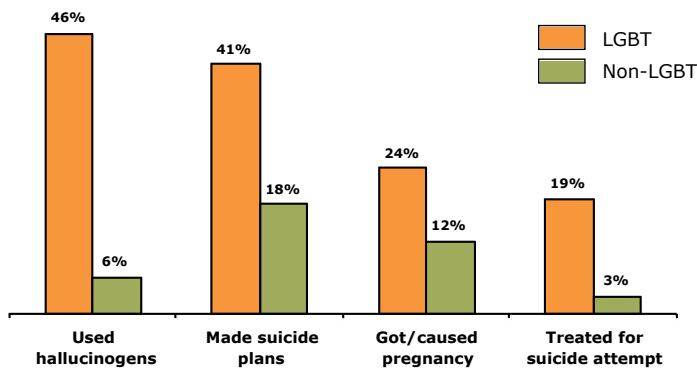
Source: "From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America," GLSEN, 1/05 (bars 1, 3 and 5 from left); "CDC/Massachusetts Department of Education Youth Risk Behavior Survey," 1999 (bars 2 and 4).

*“If you want to give kids a script for failure, take away their parents and expect them to be completely financially independent at 18.”*

– S. Wilbur, Legal Services for Children

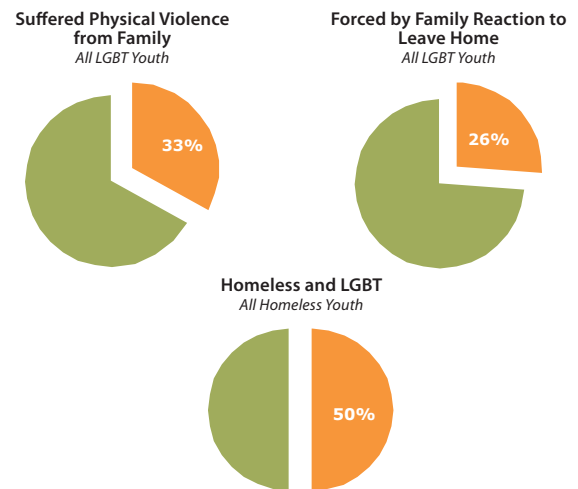
**Figure 3: LGBT Students More Likely to Engage in Self-Harmful Activities**

**Self-endangerment in Past 12 Months**  
% High school students



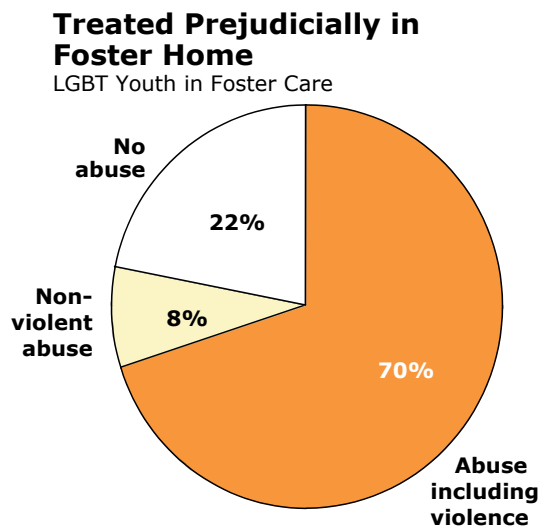
Source: “1999 CDC/Massachusetts Department of Education Youth Risk Behavior Survey.”

**Figure 4: LGBT Youth Over-Represented in Public Systems of Care**



Note: Above data may be based on particular populations in particular geographic areas. Source: *LGBT Youth Risk Data*, CWLA/Lambda Legal, 2006; *Out of the Margins*, CWLA/Lambda Legal, 2006.

**Figure 5: LGBT Youth Encounter Further Problems in Public System**



- Verbal harassment, physical and sexual abuse by staff or other youth
- Inappropriately disciplined for age-appropriate conduct
- Increasingly subjected to services of hostile religious providers (e.g., faith-based foster homes)
- Subjected to conversion therapy

Source: NCLR; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; Cochran et al, “Challenges faced by homeless sexual minorities,” *American Journal of Public Health*, 2002.

## Schools are Becoming Polarized Battlegrounds with the Religious Right

Despite all of the challenges that LGBT youth face, the increasing support of their peers and some is too much for the Religious Right. An indicator of increasing support is that 54 percent of high school seniors favor same-sex marriage, compared to only 20 to 27 percent of adults. Also only 26 percent of high school seniors support the Federal Marriage Amendment, compared to 45 to 50 percent of adults. (See Figure 6)

Similarly, 60 percent of college students disagree with the statement “homosexual relationships between consenting adults are morally wrong.” As a report last year in *Time* concluded, “Even as adult activists bicker in court, young Americans – including many young conservatives – are becoming thoroughly, even nonchalantly, gay-positive.”

These changing attitudes threaten the Religious Right, which fears losing its battle to marginalize the LGBT population, along with the financial, political, and media power this battle has engendered. Consequently, the Religious Right is becoming increasingly involved in school systems as it tries to thwart efforts that support LGBT youth and their allies.

The Religious Right uses a range of tactics to counter pro-LGBT youth work in schools, including first and foremost promoting the “truth” about homosexuality, which usually focuses on the erroneous claim that homosexuality is a choice that can be overcome through reparative therapy, as evidenced by the “Ex-gay” movement. They have supported this message with media campaigns to defend child health and safety (from their perspective), as well as religious freedom and the rights of “oppressed” Ex-gays.

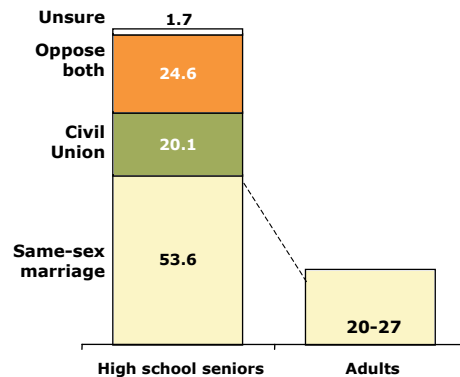
There have been particularly vehement attacks on Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs, which bring together students from all backgrounds to help fight anti-LGBT policies and cultures within high schools. (The Religious Right often refers to them as “gay sex clubs.”) After losing a number of lawsuits, which established that schools must treat GSAs with the same standards as any other student club, the Right has turned to lobbying for changes in state laws. Six state legislatures have recently considered bills that would in some way restrict GSAs, with the Georgia legislature passing a law that requires parental permission for a student to join a GSA.

The Religious Right is also copying some pro-LGBT organizations’ most effective and popular strategies – but using the strategies to organize anti-LGBT youth. In 2005, for example, the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) launched its “Day of Truth” program, the conservative Christian response to the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network’s (GLSEN’s) widespread “Day of Silence” program. The Day of Silence calls attention to anti-LGBT bullying and harassment in schools. In

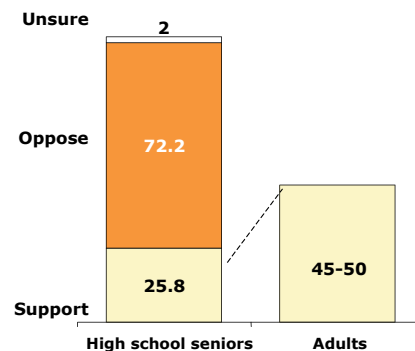
*As a report last year in Time concluded, “Even as adult activists bicker in court, young Americans – including many young conservatives – are becoming thoroughly, even nonchalantly, gay-positive.”*

**Figure 6: Gay-Friendly Attitudes of Today’s Youth Threatens Religious Right**

**Support Relationship Recognition**  
Percent of respondents, late 2005



**Support Fed Marriage Amendment**  
Percent of respondents, late 2005



Source: “Hot Button Issues Poll: Guns, Gays, and Abortion,” 1/06.

**Figure 7: Alliance Defense Fund’s Slick Marketing for ‘Day of Truth’**



2005, 450,000 students at 4,000 K-12 schools (as well as colleges and universities) took part in the Day of Silence.

The Day of Truth now occurs the day after the Day of Silence. ADF claims that 1,100 students in 350 schools participated in the program in 2005. ADF's program involves injecting Christian beliefs into public schools, which raises Constitutional issues related to speech and religious freedoms. (See Figure 7) Considering this consequence, ADF also provides students with instant access to a network of 800 attorneys who are ready to defend any students perceived to be somehow censored or punished for their anti-LGBT views.

The Religious Right also aims to paralyze LGBT-supportive schools by launching vehement attacks on the schools' "pro-LGBT" programs and policies, and persistently threatening to sue these schools. They claim that anti-bullying programs and pro-gay messages jeopardize their children's free speech rights and children's and parents' religious rights.

Recent litigation in Montgomery County, Maryland (just outside Washington, DC) received national attention. The case was filed after a citizens' committee approved by a 20 to two vote a new parental opt-in sex education curriculum for the county's school district. The committee included representatives from across the ideological spectrum, with officials from Planned Parenthood, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and numerous religious groups serving on the committee. The curriculum included a video demonstrating condom use, as well as factual treatment of same-sex parent families and other LGBT issues.

The Liberty Counsel, a right-wing legal and education organization devoted to protecting "traditional" families, created a local front group to launch a high-profile lawsuit claiming that the county's curriculum discriminated against Ex-gays and religious people. A federal judge ruled that the "curriculum presents only one view...that homosexuality is a natural and morally correct lifestyle – to the exclusion of other perspectives." Deciding not to fight that ruling, the school district shelved the curriculum, and currently prohibits teachers from initiating any discussion of homosexuality. The Liberty Counsel said that this ruling was "the most significant curriculum decision ever rendered." *US News & World Report* called the case "a model of how dissenters in other communities should act."

In April 2006 the Liberty Counsel partnered with an organization that sounds like the LGBT friendly Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG): Parents & Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX). Together, PFOX and Liberty Counsel launched the "Change is Possible" campaign, which claims to bring "a life-saving message" to students regarding their supposed ability to convert from gay to straight, and seeks to protect their "right to choose change." The "Change is Possible" campaign urges students to review and test

school policies by using a provided "Tolerance Test," distribute Ex-gay literature and posters, start Gay-to-Straight Clubs, and push for inclusion of Ex-gay viewpoints in diversity events. Again, Liberty Counsel offers immediate free legal aid to any students whose efforts are in any way thwarted.

Also in 2006, perhaps inspired by the Montgomery County ruling, Concerned Women for America (CWA), working in coalition with 60 other conservative religious organizations, launched its "Risk Audit" campaign. This campaign urges parents, churches, and Christian organizations to audit local school districts to make sure they are not "placing children at risk" or collaborating with "homosexual activists" when addressing or discussing LGBT issues. If volunteer auditors find cause for concern after following set procedures for evaluating school policies, teacher training, library materials, safe schools programs, diversity education, sex education programs, political science classes, and more, they are instructed to alert other parents, religious organizations, and the media. Sample press releases and media contact lists are provided to the volunteer auditors. Auditors and their allies are instructed to demand immediate corrective action from the school board and monitor the schools closely for compliance with these demands. If necessary, lawsuits are filed and campaigns are launched to influence school board elections.

## Religious Right Focusing on Recruiting Teens and Parents into Ex-gay Movement

The Religious Right's "Ex-gay" efforts have also responded to the earlier coming out age of youth. They are increasingly targeting families and youth, calling attention to "prehomosexual" conditions in children, teaching parents how to "prevent" homosexuality among their children, and encouraging conversion therapy for youth who identify as LGBT. Contrary to all scientific evidence and the opinions of all mainstream psychological associations (such as the American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, which the Right claims have been "taken over" by gay activists), Ex-gay groups claim that homosexuality is caused by dysfunctional parent-child relationships and can be "overcome" with counseling.

*"This new, third wave of ex-gay activism focuses less on 'curing' adults of homosexuality and more on preventing its development by targeting parents, children, and adolescents."*

— Task Force Policy Institute, 2006

Despite numerous scandals with Ex-gay leadership “falling back” into the “gay lifestyle,” the Religious Right continues to put forward Ex-gay speakers to “prove” that change is possible. Additionally, they are careful in their use of language to disguise the Fundamentalist Christian agenda behind the Ex-gay movement, talking instead about the “rights” of students to know “they have a choice,” the depression suffered by students who are “told they cannot change their homosexuality,” and the need for tolerance of Ex-gays.

A series of new conferences, programs, and organizations have been created around this issue, including Focus on the Family’s “Love Won Out” conferences and Exodus International’s Exodus Youth program. (See Figure 8)

The Religious Right is also developing a more scientific angle to its work. For example, many Religious Right organizations work with the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), which is currently leading new efforts to put a scientific spin on the conversion process. NARTH talks about homosexuality as a mental disorder that primarily results from dysfunctional parent-child

relationships. NARTH also claims that even biological causes of homosexuality – such as genetics – can be overcome with the right kind of conversion therapy and treatment. Other Religious Right groups claim that gay activists have taken over mainstream organizations such as the American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, which explains why these organizations are against conversion therapy – the Religious Right claims that the positions of these organizations have nothing to do with scientific fact.

Another message of the Religious Right is that homosexuality puts students into a “high-risk” lifestyle including higher rates of suicide and drug use. The Right however, likes to position these risks as being inherent to homosexuality as opposed to being caused by the stigma, rejection, harassment, and bullying faced by LGBT youth. All in all, there has been an astounding proliferation of Ex-gay resources in the last few years. (See Figure 9)

The next chapter of this report describes how the events described above translate into the current work underway to support LGBT youth and their families.

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### Figure 8: Ex-Gay Movement Sets Sights on Youth

- ▶ **2002** – Exodus Int’l launches Exodus Youth
- ▶ **2002** – Focus on the Family’s James Dobson issues newsletter warning about “pre-homosexuality” in children
- ▶ **2002** – NARTH\* publishes *Parent’s Guide to Preventing Homo-sexuality*, describing conversion therapy on 5-year-old
- ▶ **2004** – Dr. Warren Throckmorton’s *I Do Exist* video project makes heavy use of professors to legitimize reparative therapy
- ▶ **2005** – Exodus launches Groundswell conferences for youth pastors, campus ministers, and students
- ▶ **2006** – Focus indicates that parents comprise more than 50 percent of Love Won Out attendees

\*NARTH = National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality

## 2. UNDERSTANDING THE WORK UNDERWAY TO SUPPORT LGBT YOUTH

MAP has organized the landscape of current efforts to help LGBT youth into four streams of work:

- 1) Helping youth manage LGBT identity development;
- 2) Helping create a supportive environment in schools and on campuses;
- 3) Fighting the burgeoning Ex-gay movement; and
- 4) Helping create inclusive child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Each is discussed below.

### Helping Youth Manage LGBT Identity Development

Youth identity development work focuses on getting positive, factual information about LGBT issues into the hands of both LGBT youth and their families. LGBT youth need accurate information about homosexuality that lets them know they can have personally, professionally, and spiritually fulfilling lives as LGBT teens and adults. Nurturing support from nonjudgmental and informed adults is key, as is providing opportunities to interact with openly gay adult role models and to socialize with LGBT peers.

Families of LGBT youth need fact-based information on homosexuality. They need to learn how their words, actions, and behaviors affect their LGBT children's physical and mental health and well-being, and, if they are willing, how to protect and advocate for their LGBT children.

Forthcoming research from the César Chávez Institute's Family Acceptance Project has the potential to systematically link how LGBT youth are treated to their long-term risk levels. This in turn can provide information to change how LGBT youth are treated within their families, schools, the courts, and the foster care system because it will create a direct link between hostile behaviors towards LGBT youth and the harms they suffer as a result, and, in contrast, what behaviors can most help LGBT youth.

Understanding what specific behaviors are most beneficial and harmful to LGBT youth will provide the foundation for creating guidance for parents and other adults on how to work through tough issues (for example, how a non-accepting family might better handle the coming out process in a way that keeps their child emotionally and physically safe, while still recognizing the religious and emotional barriers to full affirmation). While in an ideal world parents would embrace and celebrate their LGBT children, the LGBT movement needs to recognize that LGBT youth are often better off remaining in a home where there is some tension (which can hopefully be facilitated by a trained social worker) than ending up in the foster care system or a group home. Even non-accepting parents almost always still love their children, but they need tools and support that meet them where they are in terms of full or partial acceptance. Prior to this research, very little was known about how family response to a youth coming out – as well as how caregivers respond to openly LGBT youth – affected LGBT youth's physical and mental health and development. The research will also be used to develop training and assessment materials for social service providers working with LGBT youth and families.

Figure 9: Astounding Proliferation of Ex-Gay Resources Since 2002



Currently, almost all LGBT youth development services are local in scope. The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC), for example, has over 4,000 entries in its database of local or regional youth-serving groups and resources. Some of the larger local LGBT youth development organizations include the Hetrick-Martin Institute in New York City, Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC) in San Francisco, Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL) in Washington, DC, the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (BAGLY), and Youth First Texas in Dallas/Ft. Worth. In addition to these local groups, national medical and psychological professional associations provide policy statements and guidelines for service providers who work with LGBT youth. PFLAG also provides family support services through some of its chapters.

## Helping Create a Supportive Environment in Schools and on Campuses

Current efforts to work with and for LGBT youth in the US education system are rather complex and multi-faceted, reflecting the complex nature of the education system itself. There are 14,000 school districts in the US, 166,000 administrators, 3.5 million teachers, and nearly 57 million students. Education policies vary from state-to-state and even within states. Bureaucracies can seem impenetrable, and trying to change laws or policies often requires huge mobilization efforts.

School-based activism includes three broad areas of work: implementing policies and protections that help LGBT youth; mobilizing young people and the broader community to support LGBT youth in schools; and influencing school activities through training seminars for teachers and staff, developing and using LGBT affirming curricula, and improving the overall school climate for LGBT youth. These different approaches are not linear or discrete, and instead interact with one another across school districts, within states, and nationally. (See Figure 10)

## Implementing Policies and Legal Protections

Implementing policies and protections to help LGBT youth involves two primary strategies: passing new public policies and litigating for reforms. Much of this work flows from three Federal protections that currently exist for LGBT youth:

- 1) The First Amendment allows free speech that is not offensive, lewd, or disruptive of work of the school;

- 2) The Equal Access Act requires public secondary schools to treat student-initiated LGBT clubs the same as other student groups; and
- 3) Title IX of the Education Act prohibits severe and pervasive sexual harassment of LGBT students in federally funded schools.

Despite these provisions, the environments of many states, school districts, and individual schools are hostile towards LGBT youth and prohibit them from organizing and formally associating in schools.

**Policy strategies** usually focus on protecting LGBT youth from harassment and violence and prohibiting discrimination in school administration and extracurricular activities. When possible, new policies should cover religious and privately run schools, in addition to public school systems, as well as include provisions that monitor compliance and award monetary damages in cases of non-compliance. Currently, few states have explicit LGBT policy protections in place. (See Figure 11)

Only a few organizations engage in school-directed policy work. These include GLSEN and PFLAG at the national level and locally through chapters; a few state-based "Safe Schools" coalitions; and the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), which works on the issue in California. The GSA Network and Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE) are supporting players in this domain.

**Litigation strategies** give parents and students tangible recourse if they are prevented from taking reasonable actions to protect LGBT youth. High-profile cases can be used to highlight specific concerns (as well as broader issues related to LGBT youth in schools) and make local changes. These strategies also put teeth into community mobilization and policy efforts. As Lambda Legal's Kevin Cathcart has observed, "File the lawsuits, cost them money. People don't always do the right thing because it's the right thing to do. If their lawyer or insurer tells them to do it they pay much more attention...".

Four organizations are involved in school litigation. Lambda Legal and the American Civil Liberties Union's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Project (ACLU L&G Project) are national in scope. Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) has a regional focus in New England, and NCLR works in California.

Figure 10: Seven Streams of Work in the Schools

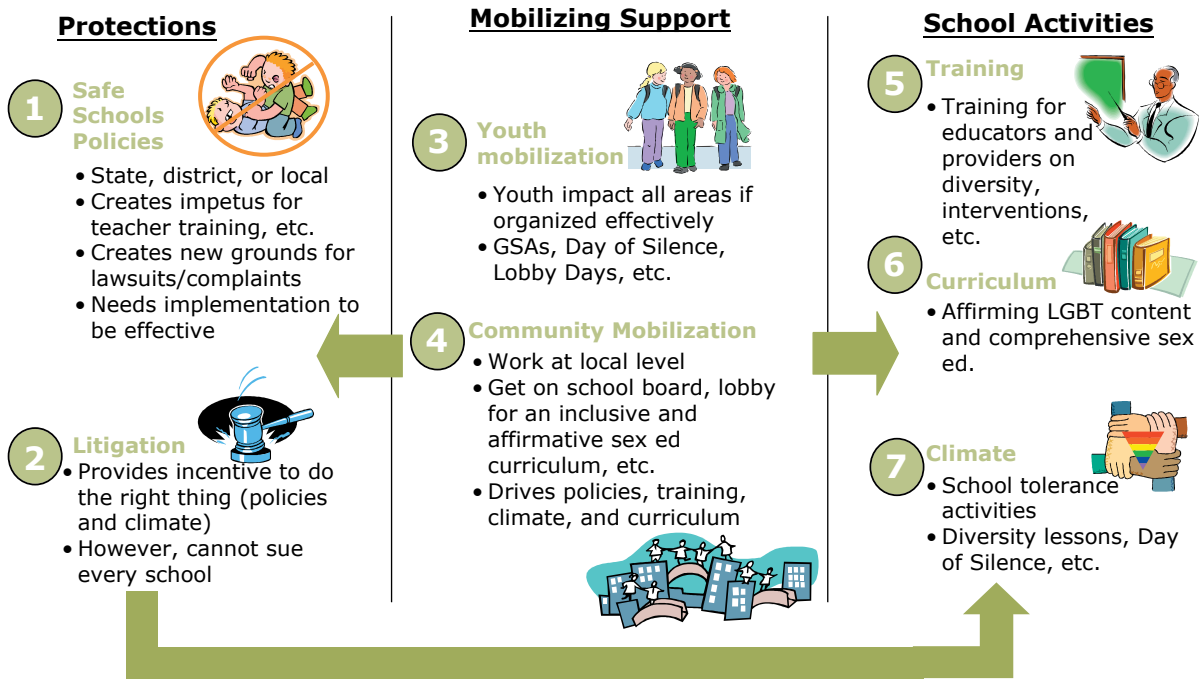
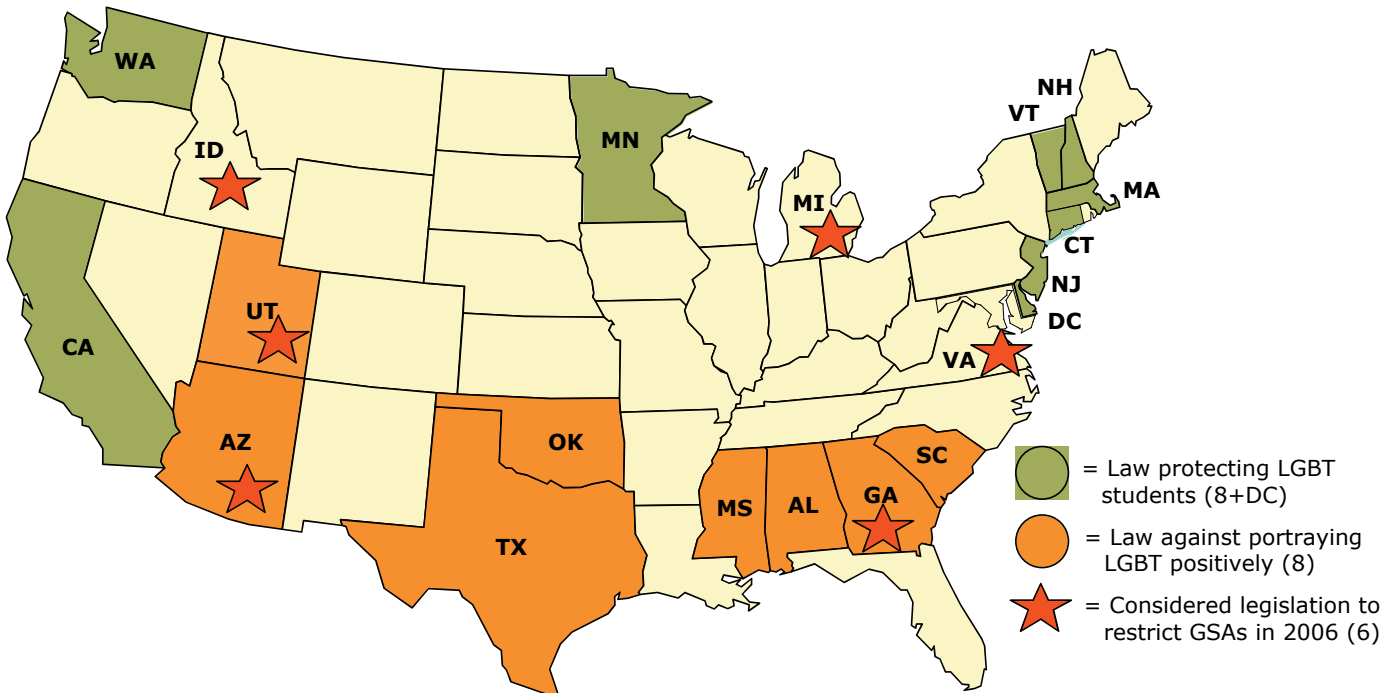


Figure 11: Few States Have LGBT Policy Protections



Source: GLSEN 2004 State of the States Report; NGLTF Education Policy: Issues Affecting LGBT Youth (11/17/03).

## Mobilizing Youth and Communities

There are two primary mobilization strategies. The first involves working directly with youth **by building gay-straight alliance (GSA) organizations and networks**. This work normalizes and increases the visibility of LGBT youth, which has the potential to empower them and their non-LGBT peers to drive policy and political changes that create safer school environments. Youth mobilization efforts also support and mentor future LGBT/progressive leaders, cultivating their voices beyond a single rally or event and teaching them grassroots organizing and civic engagement skills. Building visible coalitions of LGBT youth and their allies also provides critical support in hostile regions (for example, in rural or highly religious areas) and to marginalized youth populations (young people of color or low-income students, for example).

GLSEN and the California GSA Network are the two major players in building and mobilizing GSAs. About 20 states other than California have small GSA efforts underway, but their combined budget is less than \$200,000. COLAGE also provides some support to students trying to establish GSAs. NYAC, the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC), the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the Task Force, and Campus Pride Net engage in other youth mobilization efforts, although this work is not their primary program area.

The second mobilization strategy **organizes communities at large**. This work taps into the local educational community and parent allies, such as PTAs, principals' associations, and other community groups. These community connections can help create change at the local level, grow a politically progressive power base, and stop (or at least slow) the growth of the right-wing movement. The right-wing, for example, has been running candidates for local school boards and committees for decades – a strategy that progressive groups should consider adopting (where it is legal for them to do so).

The five main players in community mobilizing include PFLAG, the Safe Schools Coalition, some GLSEN chapters, GenderPAC, and various state coalitions of political leaders, educational groups, and LGBT organizations.

## Influencing School Activities

There are three main ways to influence school activities: training educators, changing curricula, and improving schools' overall climates for LGBT youth.

**Educators need training** to become familiar with LGBT youth and the issues they face as they struggle with sexual orientation or gender identity issues. Educators should also be trained to identify and help LGBT students who are harassed or discriminated against. Educators sometimes also need help learning to handle their own, as well as others', dis-

comfort with issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity. These training efforts can help increase school safety and provide a more supportive school environment for LGBT youth. One study found that in schools where teachers have been trained, 54 percent of LGBT students reported feeling supported at school, compared to only 25 percent of LGBT students in schools where teachers have not been trained.

GLSEN and Women's Educational Media lead educator training efforts nationwide. PFLAG and the National Education Association (NEA) also provide some training services nationally. Various state coalitions and GLSEN chapters, as well as the Safe Schools Coalition in Washington State, participate in regional training work.

**Curriculum work** involves creating inclusive, or at least reflective, school environments that prioritize scientific, fact-based approaches – rather than religious or political approaches – to physical and mental health. One priority is updating sex education programs with accurate information on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), birth control, and different types of sexuality. Fighting abstinence-only programs is key because they exclude LGBT sexuality completely; their abstinence-only-until-marriage message leaves LGBT youth with only celibacy; and they provide almost no information on birth control or the use of condoms to prevent STDs. Abstinence-only education, while shown effective in delaying first sexual experiences, has resulted in higher overall pregnancy and STD rates because youth are completely unprepared to protect themselves once they do become sexually active. Additionally, the lack of discussion about condoms (other than allowing teachers to state that abstinence, not condoms, is the only sure-fire way to prevent STDs) is particularly harmful for young gay men at risk of HIV/AIDS.

Beyond the importance of an updated and fact-based sex education curriculum, other helpful curricula changes involve ensuring that diverse families are acknowledged, welcomed, and respected (e.g., when engaging in family tree exercises), and including LGBT content in school subjects where appropriate, such as discussing Stonewall in a history class or Walt Whitman in an English class.

Few organizations are involved in implementing LGBT-positive curricula. The California Safe Schools Coalition (which works with NCLR on this issue), the Safe Schools Coalition, PFLAG, COLAGE, the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), and Advocates for Youth do some work on this issue, although it's generally not their primary area of focus.

**Improving schools' climates** focuses on establishing a norm of tolerance and reducing bullying, both of which help normalize and increase the visibility of LGBT youth. Interventions to reduce bullying include forming clear rules and strong social norms against bullying, and providing support

and protection for students who are bullied. These types of interventions have reduced bullying by 30 to 50 percent in Norway and England. In the US, “No Name Calling Week” programs have had a positive effect on schools, and appear to establish tolerance as a norm. More than 33 percent of students reported that name calling and bullying lessened in their schools after these programs, and the majority of students reported they had experienced or perpetrated bullying less often afterwards.

GLSEN and Women’s Educational Media lead efforts to change school climates. Other organizations involved to a smaller degree include the California GSA Network, COLAGE, PFLAG, and other state groups that support student-led diversity programs.

## Fighting the Burgeoning Ex-Gay Movement

Only a handful of LGBT organizations are challenging the growing Ex-gay movement, and, as of now, there is no real coordinated response. The biggest challenge of this work involves dismantling the myths that the Ex-gay movement propagates and exposing the severe harms that result when trying to change something that is as innate as sexuality. For instance, just as creationism is no longer taught in schools because it is contrary to overwhelming scientific opinion, “conversion therapy” is also based on religious belief versus scientific evidence, and is contrary to the overwhelming opinion of the psychological community. Therefore, the “right” to speak to students about conversion therapy should face the same limitations as the “right” to speak to students about creationism. Similarly, conversion therapy has led to extreme depression and even suicide by those who find that despite years of counseling and thousands of dollars of fees, they still feel same-sex attraction. While conversion therapy is usually not performed by licensed psychologists, the completely unscientific and unsound practices used are almost certainly a form of malpractice.

LGBT-led efforts to counter the Ex-gay movement are limited, but growing. Truth Wins Out is a new organization devoted exclusively to countering the Ex-gay movement. Ex-Gay Watch, an online forum that tracks Ex-gay activity, works closely with Truth Wins Out. The Task Force and GLSEN also engage in research related to the Ex-gay movement.

This issue area is ripe for bringing in mainstream allies who can help debunk Ex-gay claims with factual responses and scientific data.

One caveat is needed: The Ex-gay movement on the Religious Right often appears much larger than it actually is, both in terms of supporters and finances. Ex-gay organiza-

tions are very skilled at leveraging media exposure related to this issue, which creates the impression that this movement is widespread and strong. It merits close watching, but the best response may be to continue to treat the Ex-gay organizations as the belief-based fringe groups that they are.

## Helping Create Inclusive Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems

As noted earlier, LGBT youth frequently find themselves in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (youth in these systems are often referred to as “out-of-home” youth). Concerted efforts are underway to improve the experiences LGBT youth have in these systems, including strategies to implement new social service delivery policies and practices, educate and train service providers, and litigate to expand LGBT youth protections within these systems.

The policy work involves demonstrating problems in the existing systems, passing state laws to prohibit discrimination at service facilities, and changing agencies’ and facilities’ non-statutory policies. The training and education component helps service providers, systems of care, and LGBT families prevent homelessness among LGBT youth, and trains intake workers, caseworkers, and foster parents to provide fair treatment and consideration to LGBT youth who enter various care systems. Litigation efforts currently promote the constitutional right to safety that LGBT youth have when in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Litigation strategies also help LGBT youth access support services to which they are legally entitled.

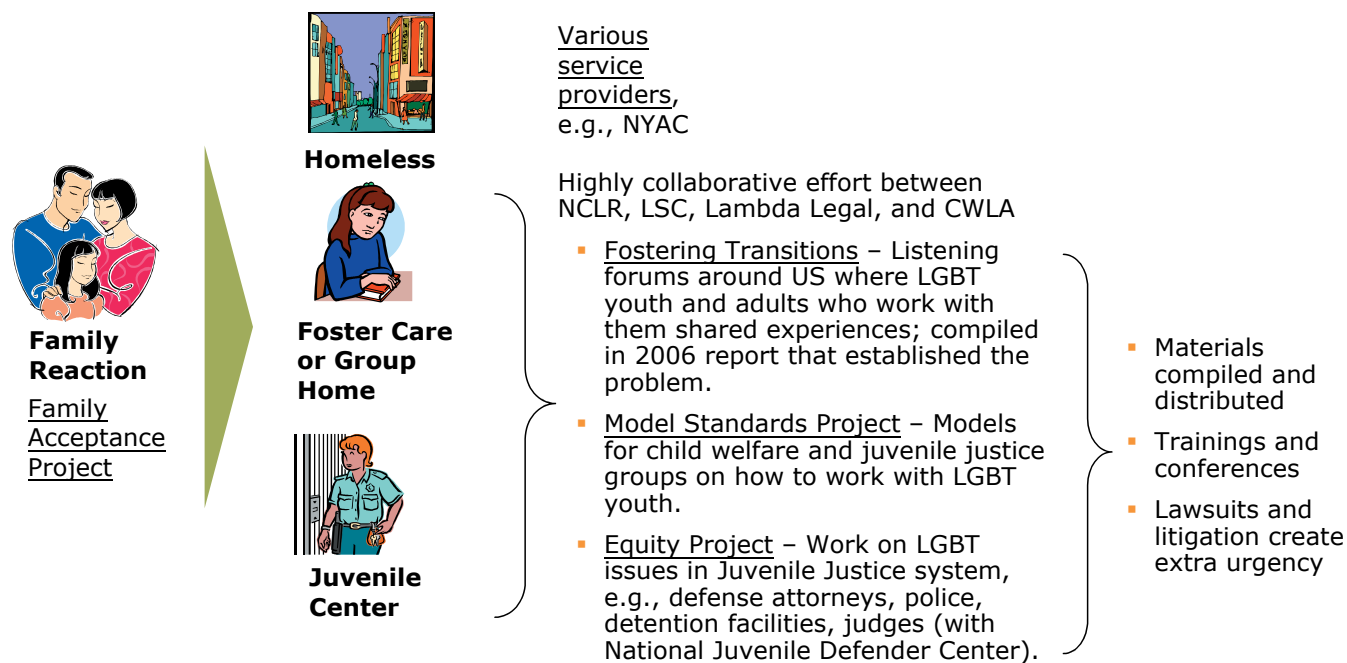
Almost all work related to out-of-home youth involves non-LGBT ally organizations. A huge network of child welfare and juvenile justice experts exists, and many of these individuals have large influence within their field and with policymakers. There is not much organized opposition to LGBT efforts related to out-of-home youth, since most child welfare organizations believe in basic concepts of social justice and care about the youth that they serve. Consequently, most of these organizations see LGBT issues as part of their programming. In other words, LGBT issues are not treated as special or separate topics – instead, training related to LGBT issues are integrated into main service delivery models.

Interest in LGBT issues related to out-of-home youth appears to be growing in the child welfare community. Conference sessions devoted to LGBT youth are usually filled to capacity. To meet this increased interest, in November 2006 the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), which represents 900 child welfare agencies, hosted a three-day conference on “Addressing the Needs of LGBTQ Children, Youth, and Families Involved in the Child Welfare System.”

The out-of-home LGBT youth field is very collaborative, and could serve as a model for other issue areas related to LGBT youth. For example, NCLR, Legal Services for Children, Lambda Legal, and CWLA are all working together to improve the foster care, group home, and juvenile justice environments for LGBT youth. (See Figure 12) The Task Force and the American Bar Association’s Children and the Law program are also important players in the LGBT out-of-home youth field.

Having mainstream children’s organizations take the lead on LGBT issues has been very effective. For example, when conservative organizations in several states attempted to ban gay adoption, mainstream children’s services organizations stepped forward to expose the harmful consequences of these initiatives on children, and effectively killed the proposed bans.

**Figure 12: Several Large Players in Productive Out-of-Home Youth Alliance**



*Note: NYAC is National Youth Advocacy Coalition; LSC is Legal Services for Children; CWLA is Child Welfare League of America.*

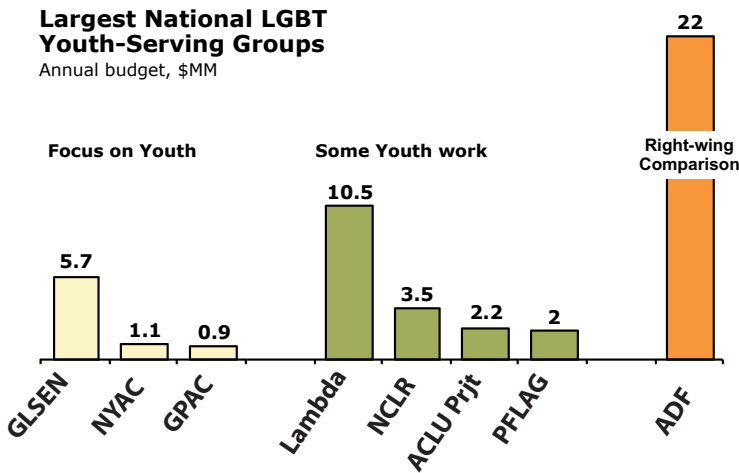
### 3. PROMISING AVENUES FOR INVESTMENT IN SUPPORTING LGBT YOUTH

The LGBT youth field involves very complex mental and physical health concerns, controversial political issues and players, and complicated service delivery systems. Unfortunately, Religious Right organizations have budgets that dwarf those of largest LGBT organizations working in the youth arena. (See Figure 13) Not surprisingly, there are many opportunities for funders to support LGBT youth.

Four major types of funding opportunities are discussed below. Current funding levels for the different types of youth work varies dramatically, with school work receiving the bulk of the effort and funding, and Ex-gay work having very limited funds. (See Figure 14) To help funders envision what a youth funding portfolio might look like, MAP performed a hypothetical exercise to show how \$3.5 million in new an-

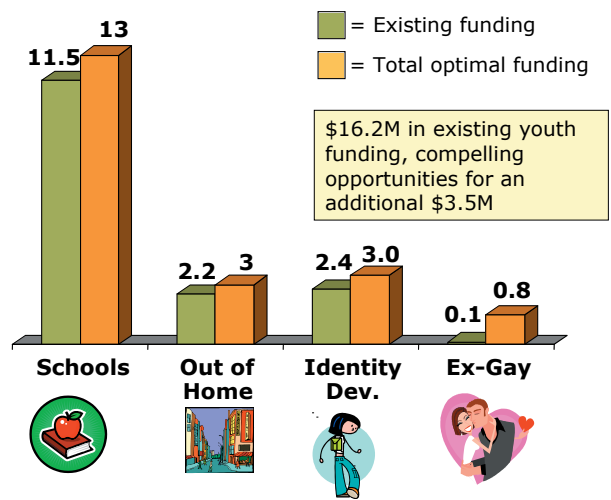
nual funds might be allocated across the different youth work streams. Note that this exercise is not meant to endorse any specific organization, or to suggest there are not other funding opportunities that are worthwhile. Further, these recommendations are based on the landscape as of late 2006 – readers should understand that as the landscape changes, so do funding recommendations. MAP recognizes that most funders will not be able to contribute at the levels outlined below, however, there are a myriad of opportunities to make a difference. For individual and institutional funders who are interested in funding LGBT youth-focused organizations, the appendix lists the largest organizations working in this area, along with a brief description of their mission, and contact information. Funders can also consult with MAP staff for more information on the recommendations below. That said, Figures 14 and 15 display MAP’s consolidated recommendations and some predicted outcomes.

**Figure 13: Few Resources Going to National LGBT Youth Efforts**



Note: ADF is Alliance Defense Fund, just one of our opponents in the schools.

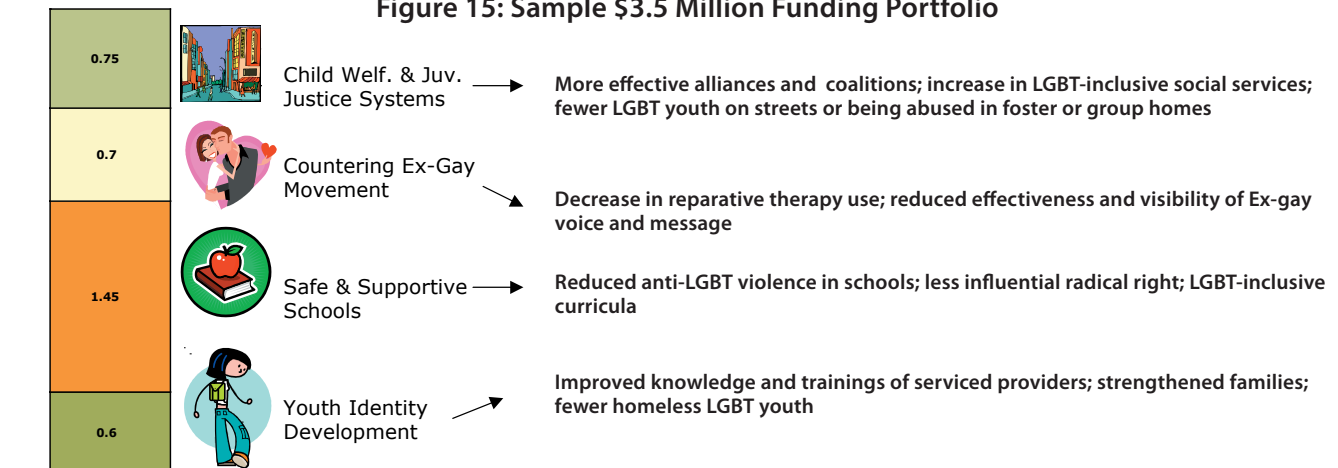
**Figure 14: Estimated Existing Funding Across Youth Work**



\$16.2M in existing youth funding, compelling opportunities for an additional \$3.5M

Note: Figures are based on MAP estimates based on using LGBT youth organization’s stated focus on youth issues to allocate a rough percentage of total organizational budget

**Figure 15: Sample \$3.5 Million Funding Portfolio**



\* Note: Costs may decrease over time; funding could be scaled back after progress has been made, or resources could be redeployed to other youth initiatives

## Youth Identity Development, New Funding Opportunities of \$0.6 Million

Players in this area include the Family Acceptance Project, NYAC, and a myriad of local youth services providers such as the Hetrick-Martin institute and BAGLEY. Work that is currently unfunded but which would be valuable includes:

- ▶ **Supporting a lobbying effort to have LGBT issues included in state Youth Risk Behavior Surveys.** These are government-sponsored state-wide surveys of youth that measure a variety of risky behaviors from driving without a seatbelt to taking drugs to engaging in unprotected sexual activity. Only a handful of states include questions related to sexual orientation, and even in these states the inclusion is not always consistent and the data collected are not always analyzed. When the data are analyzed, they reveal powerful correlations, such as LGBT youth being threatened with a weapon three times more often than heterosexual students. Gaining inclusion in Youth Risk Behavior Surveys and making sure follow up research and analysis is done would require organizations (e.g., GLSEN, state coalitions) to work with State Boards of Education. Recommendation: an annual investment of \$100,000 to fund an organization or staff position to work the five to eight key states that have the most potential for change.

- ▶ **Funding the completion of the Family Acceptance Project, including messaging and dissemination of research, as well as training materials for parents and service providers.** These efforts would provide an important counter to the Religious Right as the main source of aid and advice for non-accepting parents. Recommendation: a preliminary investment of \$0.5 million, which would support messaging and dissemination of existing research to the media and to service providers. This could be followed by an additional investment of \$0.5 to \$1.5 million to expand the research to African American LGBT families, and to develop training strategies for service providers, including toolkits and materials for working with families of LGBT youth (this follow-up funding is not included in the sample portfolio).

- ▶ **Other potential new initiatives could include academic research and public dissemination to show that non-heterosexuality is normal.** Recommendation: Nice-to-have, but not critical funding priority as this type of research can be very expensive and is often not compelling to the public or media regardless of its basis in fact. Estimated cost of at least \$150,000 per year for minimal research. (This funding is not included in the sample portfolio).

## Safe and Supportive Schools, New Funding Opportunities of \$1.45 Million

Funding continues to be needed for schools work, including supporting existing policy, litigation, youth mobilization, community organizing, training, and climate and curriculum work. Potential new funding opportunities include:

- ▶ **Strengthening state GSA networks beyond the California GSA Network** (e.g., groups in 15 states have asked for help in adopting the California GSA Network model, which organizes and trains GSA students; funding is the biggest obstacle for these groups). Recommendation: an annual investment of \$90,000 in 5 key states that have the most potential for change (\$450,000 total new investment for this issue).

- ▶ **Creating new safe schools coalitions in key states.** This goal can be accomplished by funding a champion to bring together a coalition of local and state groups if there is enough supportive ally infrastructure, or, if there is a complete lack of supportive infrastructure, to fund a leading LGBT or allied group to independently lead organizing efforts. Recommendation: an annual investment of \$80,000 in 5 key states that have the most potential for change (\$400,000 total new investment for this issue).

- ▶ **Creating a schools-focused crisis management and media team.** These efforts could perhaps be based within an existing organization. They would provide rapid legal and media response to unfolding anti-LGBT events and right-wing attacks in schools, including providing legal, messaging, and media support at local levels; publicizing through the media the almost daily reports of anti-LGBT bullying activities; and contacting schools when anti-bullying occurs, providing them with model anti-bullying policies and trainings. Recommendation: \$150,000 each year.

- ▶ **Hiring consultants to provide expert advice in community organizing to parents and communities** (again, perhaps staffed within an existing organization). Recommendation: \$150,000 each year.

- ▶ **Training future teachers in targeted teaching colleges with diversity training classes delivered through a partnership approach.** This could be done by targeting the key “funnel” schools for teachers in several key states and working with local state organizations to develop a joint program that can be delivered to each class of teaching students one time per semester. Recommendation: \$100,000 each year.

▶ Strengthening existing initiatives around teacher training and school climate work. The most effective training model has been when organizations leverage their resources, either by working through aggressive partnerships (e.g., providing training materials and assistance to local or state educator groups who then go on to deliver the training) or working through another train-the-trainer model. While Women’s Educational Media and GLSEN lead in this area, many other state and local organizations (e.g., local PFLAG chapters, state safe schools coalitions) also do teacher training. MAP’s research noted that there is a need for some collaboration and consolidation between the various LGBT groups — many groups have developed their own training models, relationships and partnerships, and having a common approach to teacher training, even if carried out by various local organizations, would be helpful. In terms of school climate work, there are opportunities to expand programs such as the Day of Silence (e.g., GLSEN is working on launching an “Ally Week”). Recommendation: \$200,000 each year.

### Ex-gay Counter Opportunities, New Funding Opportunities of \$0.7 Million

A basic strategy for countering the Ex-gay movement is needed, including media and communications training, specific messaging, and general talking points. The only LGBT organization currently focused on this issue is Truth Wins Out, though the Task Force and GLSEN have done some Ex-gay countering work as well. The Ex-gay movement works locally, across states, and nationally, so LGBT efforts in this area need to be equally sophisticated and thorough.

New funding opportunities in this area might include:

- ▶ **Building the capacity of Truth Wins Out.**  
Recommendation: \$150,000 each year.
- ▶ **Developing Ex-gay litigation test cases** that focus on issues related to psychological malpractice and inappropriate curriculum lawsuits.  
Recommendation: \$250,000 each year.
- ▶ **Conducting research debunking the supposed effectiveness of reparative therapy.**  
Recommendation: \$150,000 each year.
- ▶ **Funding ally organization outreach** to allow mainstream organizations (e.g., psychological associations, teacher associations, counselor associations, and other social services agencies) to speak out about the harmful effects of promoting reparative therapy.  
Recommendation: \$150,000 each year.

### Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice, New Funding Opportunities of \$0.75 million

Finally, LGBT youth work around child welfare and juvenile justice systems could be strengthened and expanded through an infusion of more general operating support grants. Lambda Legal, the Child Welfare League of America, NCLR, and Legal Services for Children have done a huge amount of work in this area, defining the problems in the juvenile and foster care systems, and developing training materials for service providers on how to address them. Additional funding for these organizations could be used to roll out findings and training programs for foster care and juvenile justice providers. As young people come out at younger ages, the demands for some services will likely continue to increase. Investing in these systems now could benefit many LGBT youth in the future. Recommendation: \$0.75 million distributed among the major players each year.

*Individual organizational contact information is available in Appendix A, and more detailed information on the larger organizations is available on the Movement Advancement Project web site, [www.lgbtmap.org](http://www.lgbtmap.org).*

## 4. CONCLUSION

Supporting LGBT youth is a sound investment for funders committed to advancing LGBT equality. LGBT youth face many opportunities and challenges right now, whether coming out to their families or peers at an earlier age or dealing with attacks from the Religious Right. The systems and organizations that support LGBT youth and their families need to be strengthened to help these youth overcome today's challenges, take full advantage of current and future opportunities, and grow into healthy, happy, and responsible adults.

The long-term payoff for supporting youth is not limited to improving the lives of individuals – although outcomes related to individual development are very important. However, this work also builds future movement leadership and increases support for the larger LGBT movement over the long-term by exposing straight youth to the very real struggles that LGBT youth face. Engaging all types of youth now on LGBT issues is an essential component of impacting their willingness to support – or at least not actively oppose – LGBT rights and equality when they are adults and become politically engaged.

While there is much to be done, and the opposition is well-funded and organized, the good news is that the younger generation is becoming, slowly but surely, increasingly supportive of LGBT people and issues. That said, funding efforts to help LGBT youth will go a long way to speeding the fight for equality, in addition to improving the lives of thousands of LGBT youth who come out to friends, schools, families and institutions that are often ill-equipped or unwilling to support them.

## APPENDIX A: BRIEF PROFILES OF ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON BEHALF OF LGBT YOUTH

Below is a list of the most prominent organizations uncovered during MAP's analysis of the issues impacting LGBT youth. It is not, however, a complete list of all organizations working on these issues. Additionally, inclusion on this list is not necessarily an endorsement by MAP, nor is exclusion from this list an indication that MAP does not recommend funding an organization. Donors are advised to do their own due diligence before making funding commitments.

### Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice

▶ Child Welfare League of America, (*National*). CWLA is an association of nearly 800 public and private nonprofit agencies that provide a range of services to more than 3.5 million abused and neglected children and their families. CWLA works with LGBT organizations to build the child welfare system's capacity to work equitably and constructively with young people, family members, and employees who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning their sexual orientation. Contact: [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org), 202.638.2952.

### Ex-gay Counter

▶ Truth Wins Out, (*National*). TWO works to counter Ex-gay organizations and their message that LGBT people can change their sexual or gender orientation. Contact: [www.truthwinsout.com](http://www.truthwinsout.com).

### Family Organizations

▶ Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere, (*National*). COLAGE engages, connects, and empowers people to make the world a better place for children of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender parents and families. Contact: [www.colage.org](http://www.colage.org), 415.861.5437.

▶ Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, (*National and Local*). PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, their families, and friends through support, education, and advocacy. Contact PFLAG National to find a chapter in your area: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org), 202.467.8180.

### Legal Organizations

▶ ACLU's LGBT Project, (*National*). The LGBT Project fights discrimination and moves public opinion on LGBT rights through the courts, legislatures and public education. Contact: [www.aclu.org/lgbt](http://www.aclu.org/lgbt), 212.549.2627.

▶ Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, (*New England*). GLAD is New England's leading legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status, and gender identity and expression. Contact: [www.glad.org](http://www.glad.org), 617.426.1350.

▶ Lambda Legal, (*National*). Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people, and those with HIV through impact litigation, education, and public policy work. Contact: [www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org), 212-809-8585.

▶ Legal Services for Children, (*National*). LSC provides free legal and social work services to children and youth in order to stabilize their lives and help them realize their full potential. LSC works with the National Center for Lesbian Rights to implement professional standards governing the care of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth in out-of-home care. Contact: [www.lsc-sf.org](http://www.lsc-sf.org), 415.863.3762.

▶ National Center for Lesbian Rights, (*National*). NCLR is a national legal organization committed to advancing the legal and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education. Contact: [www.nclrights.org](http://www.nclrights.org), 415.392.6257.

### Safe and Supportive Schools

▶ ACLU of Eastern Missouri. The chapter's "Making Schools Safe Project" supports GSAs and other safe-school policies. Contact: [www.aclu-em.org/issues/lgbtrights/making-schoolssafe](http://www.aclu-em.org/issues/lgbtrights/making-schoolssafe), 314.361.3635.

▶ Advocates for Youth, (*National*). Advocates for Youth is dedicated to creating programs and advocating for policies that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Although not an LGBT-specific organization, Advocates for Youth fights for comprehensive, LGBT-inclusive sex education programs. Contact: [www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org), 202.419.3420.

▶ California Safe Schools Coalition. The California Safe Schools Coalition is a statewide partnership of organizations and individuals dedicated to eliminating discrimination and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity in California schools. Contact: [www.casafeschools.org](http://www.casafeschools.org), 415.626.1680.

▶ Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, (*National*). GLSEN strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Contact: [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org), 212.727.0135.

- ▶ GLBT Youth in Iowa Schools Task Force. The Task Force increases understanding in local school districts and communities about GLBT students, increases awareness and addresses the inequities regarding safety of GLBT students in Iowa, and improves school climates in order to increase the personal safety, mental health, and achievement levels of GLBT students. Contact: [www.iowasafeschools.org](http://www.iowasafeschools.org), 515.243.1221.
- ▶ GLSEN Chapters. GLSEN maintains chapters in the following states: *Alaska (Anchorage), Arizona (Phoenix and Tucson), California (Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego County), Colorado (Lakewood), Connecticut (Stamford), Florida (Jacksonville, St. Petersburg, Ft. Lauderdale, and Tampa), Kansas (Kansas City), Maine (Ellsworth and Portland), Maryland (Rockville), Massachusetts (Boston), Michigan (Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Grand Rapids), Missouri (Kansas City and St. Louis), Nebraska (Omaha), Nevada (Las Vegas), New Hampshire (Temple), New Jersey (Highstown and Upper Montclair), New York (Nyack, Milton, Yorktown Heights, Albany, and Rochester), North Dakota (Grand Forks), Ohio (Cincinnati and Oberlin), Oregon (Portland), Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh), Texas (Dallas), Virginia (Fairfax and Richmond), and Washington (Seattle)*. Please visit [www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/chapter/chapter/index.html](http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/chapter/chapter/index.html) for contact information for each chapter.
- ▶ Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth. LIGALY's Safe Schools Initiative offers a broad base of services and programs to help students and school staff develop a school culture that fosters support, understanding, and respect for GLBT students. LIGALY implements these programs through collaborative partnerships with over 90 school districts throughout both Nassau and Suffolk counties of Long Island. Contact: [www.ligaly.com](http://www.ligaly.com), 631.665.2300.
- ▶ National Education Association, (National). The NEA provides resources to educators about the needs of LGBT students and advocates for safe schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Contact: [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org), 202.833.4000.
- ▶ Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition. OS-SCC supports community efforts to reduce youth suicide and other risk behaviors in the underserved gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth population. OS-SCC is partnering with the California Safe Schools Coalition to expand gay-straight alliance work in Oregon. Contact: [www.oregonsafeschools.org](http://www.oregonsafeschools.org), 503.232.4556.
- ▶ Out Youth in Austin, (Central Texas). Out Youth promotes the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being of sexual minority youth in central Texas so that they can openly and safely explore and affirm their identities. Contact: [www.outyouth.org](http://www.outyouth.org), 512.419.1233.
- ▶ Outright Vermont. Outright Vermont builds safe, healthy, and supportive environments for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth in the state. Outright Vermont serves as a clearinghouse for information on the state's GSA network, maintaining updated lists of Vermont schools with GSAs and lists of LGBTQ friendly guidance counselors and teachers. Contact: [www.outrightvt.org](http://www.outrightvt.org), 802.865.9677.
- ▶ Safe Schools Coalition, (International and National). The Safe Schools Coalition helps schools become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. Contact: [www.safeschoolscoalition.org](http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org), 206.632.0662.
- ▶ Safe Schools North Carolina. Safe Schools NC is a state-wide partnership of organizations and individuals dedicated to eliminating bullying, harassment, and discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity in North Carolina Schools. Safe Schools NC is partnering with the California Safe Schools Coalition to expand gay-straight alliance work in North Carolina. Contact: [safeschoolsnc.com](http://safeschoolsnc.com), 910.608.2016.
- ▶ Santa Fe Mountain Center. The Center's Climbing Up, Climbing Out program provides facilitated adventure activities for LGBTQ youth so they have a safe place to express themselves, nurture positive identity development, build resiliency against homophobia and oppression, and be mentored by LGBTQ adults and allies. The New Mexico GSA Network is part of this program, and is the first official replication site of the GSA Network in California. Contact: [www.sf-mc.com/programs/cuco.shtml](http://www.sf-mc.com/programs/cuco.shtml), 505.983.6158.
- ▶ Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, (National). SIECUS affirms that sexuality is a fundamental part of being human, one that is worthy of dignity and respect, and advocates for the right of all people to accurate information, comprehensive education about sexuality, and sexual health services. SIECUS helps state and local groups write comprehensive, LGBT-inclusive (but not LGBT-specific) sex education legislation, trains teachers regarding comprehensive sexual education, and reviews sexual education curriculum. Contact: [www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org), 202.265.2405.
- ▶ True Colors, (Connecticut). True Colors Sexual Minority Youth and Family Services combats homophobia, gender bias, and racism by providing support, education, and advocacy to those responsible for the health, education, and well-being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Youth and Families. As part of its mission, True Colors coordinates Connecticut's GSA work. Contact: [www.ourtrue-colors.org](http://www.ourtrue-colors.org), 860.649.7386.

▶ Women's Educational Media, (*National*). Women's Educational Media is a highly acclaimed progressive social issue documentary film production company and a leader in the field of anti-bias education. WEM's Respect for All Project helps educators understand the importance of addressing gay issues with young children in an age-appropriate way, and of helping kids make the link between sexual orientation and issues such as race, ethnicity and gender. Contact: [www.womedia.org](http://www.womedia.org), 415.641.4616.

▶ Youth Pride Rhode Island. YPI is dedicated to meeting the social, emotional and educational needs of Rhode Island youth and young adults impacted by sexual orientation and gender identity. YPI works with the Rhode Island GSA Coalition to support GSAs across the state. Contact: [www.youthpride-ri.org](http://www.youthpride-ri.org), 401.421.5626.

There are many other organizations and coalitions doing safe schools work across the country. Other safe schools coalitions, for example, include:

- ▶ Boulder Valley (CO) Safe Schools Coalition
- ▶ The Northeast Florida Safe Schools Coalition
- ▶ Enlight Atlanta
- ▶ Hawaii's Safe Schools Coalition
- ▶ Michigan Safe Schools Coalition
- ▶ Out for Equity (St. Paul, MN)
- ▶ The Coalition for Safer Schools of New York State
- ▶ The Safe Schools Coalition for Northern Nevada
- ▶ Safe Schools Are for Everyone (Cleveland, OH)
- ▶ Safe Schools of Wyoming

Contact information for these coalitions – as well as a listing of and contact information for many other state and local safe schools organizations – can be found at: [www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-US\\_GLBTOyouth.html](http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-US_GLBTOyouth.html).

## Youth Organizing & GSAs

▶ CampusPride Net, (*National*). CampusPride serves student leaders of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and ally campus organizations by providing access to accurate and consistent resources that demonstrate support, education, and visibility on college and university campuses. Contact: [www.campuspride.net](http://www.campuspride.net), 704.277.6710.

▶ Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools, (*South Central Wisconsin*). Formerly a GLSEN chapter, GSA for Safe Schools just recently incorporated as an independent organization. It plans to expand its work supporting GSAs in south central Wisconsin. Contact: [www.gsaforsafeschools.org](http://www.gsaforsafeschools.org), 608.661.4141.

▶ Gay Straight Alliance Network (*California*). The Gay-Straight Alliance Network is a youth-led organization that connects school-based Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) to each other and community resources. Through peer support, leadership development, and training, GSA Network supports young people in starting, strengthening, and sustaining GSAs and building the capacity of GSAs. Contact: [www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org), 415.552.4229.

▶ Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (*National*). Gender PAC works to ensure that classrooms, communities, and workplaces are safe for everyone to learn, grow, and succeed – whether or not they meet expectations for masculinity and femininity. As a human rights organization, GenderPAC also promotes an understanding of the connection between discrimination based on gender stereotypes and sex, sexual orientation, age, race, and class. Contact: [www.gpac.org](http://www.gpac.org), 202.462.6610.

▶ Imagine Project GSA Network, (*Regionally in Arizona*). The Imagine Project GSA Network provides support and resources to the 14 GSAs working in Tucson and Pima Counties. The Project is partnering with the CA Safe Schools Coalition to expand gay-straight alliance work in this region of Arizona. No contact information was available.

▶ Kansas GSA Network. Volunteers in Kansas are working with the CA Safe Schools Coalition to expand gay-straight alliance work in the state. No contact information was available.

▶ Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, (*New York City Metro Area*). The Center's Youth Enrichment Services Program runs the Safer Schools program, which is a group of student leaders that works to end hate and homophobia in schools by starting GSAs and other student groups. Contact: [www.gaycenter.org](http://www.gaycenter.org), 212.620.7310 or [www.centeryes.org/SIGNS/](http://www.centeryes.org/SIGNS/).

## Youth Research

▶ Family Acceptance Project, (*National*). The Family Acceptance Project is a community research, intervention, and training initiative to study the impact of family acceptance and rejection on the health, mental health, and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. Research results will be used to help families provide support for non-heterosexual youth, to develop appropriate interventions, programs and policies, and to train providers to improve the quality of services and care they receive. Contact: [familyproject.sfsu.edu](http://familyproject.sfsu.edu), 415.522.5879.

## Youth Services

▶ The Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Youth. BAGLY is a youth-led, adult supported organization that creates, sustains, and advocates for programs, policies, and services for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth community in and around Boston. Contact: [www.bagly.org](http://www.bagly.org), 617.227.4313.

▶ Hetrick Martin Institute, (New York City). Through a comprehensive package of direct services and referrals, HMI seeks to foster healthy development among LGBTQ youth. HMI is the home of the Harvey Milk High School. Contact: [www.hmi.org](http://www.hmi.org), 212.674.2400.

▶ Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center, (San Francisco Bay Area). LYRIC builds community and inspires positive social change through education enhancement, career training, health promotion, and leadership development with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth, their families, and allies of all races, classes, genders, and abilities. Contact: [www.lyric.org](http://www.lyric.org), 415.703.6150.

▶ National Youth Advocacy Coalition, (National). NYAC is a social justice organization that advocates for and with young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) in an effort to end discrimination against these youth and to ensure their physical and emotional well being. Contact: [www.nyacyouth.org](http://www.nyacyouth.org), 202.319.7596.

▶ Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League, (Washington, DC Metro Area). SMYAL is dedicated to supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth, and promotes and supports self-confident, healthy, productive lives for LGBTQ youth as they journey from adolescence into adulthood. Contact: [www.smyal.org](http://www.smyal.org), 202.546.5940

▶ Youth First Texas, (Dallas Metro Area). Youth First Texas provides group interaction and individual support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth by providing age appropriate activities, programs, and resources that facilitate empowerment and self acceptance. Contact: [www.youthfirst-texas.org](http://www.youthfirst-texas.org), 214.879.0400.

*NYAC's website provides a directory of local LGBT youth service organizations. Visit [www.nyacyouth.org](http://www.nyacyouth.org) to find a LGBT youth services group or community center in your area.*

## APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

### Methodology

MAP's findings and recommendations are based on over eight months of research and examination of LGBT youth issues, including data gathering and analysis, review of current literature and media, numerous in-depth expert interviews, attendance at key conferences, etc. To complete this report,

MAP:

- ▶ Read over 55 articles
- ▶ Performed 34 interviews
  - 6 family organizations
  - 6 safe schools organizations or coalitions
  - 4 legal organizations
  - 5 funders
  - 3 allied child welfare organizations
  - 3 omnibus organizations
  - 3 youth service providers
  - 2 research organizations
  - 1 anti-Ex-gay organization
  - 1 GSA organization
- ▶ Performed extensive online research, watched 4 videos, and performed analysis of organizational data
- ▶ Did site visits and attended workshops and conferences
  - Creating Change, Safe Schools Roundtable

### Interviewees

Judy Appel, Executive Director, Our Family Coalition

Wayne Besen, Executive Director, Truth Wins OUT

Craig Bowman, Executive Director, NYAC

Rea Carey, Deputy Executive Director, The Task Force

Kevin Cathcart, Executive Director, Lambda Legal

Jennifer Chrisler, Executive Director, Family Pride

Brad Clark, Executive Director, GLBT Youth in Iowa Schools Task Force

Matt Coles, Director, ACLU LGBT Project

Michael Fleming, Executive Director, David Bohnett Foundation

Matt Foreman, Executive Director, The Task Force

Rebecca Fox, Assistant Director for Public Policy, SIECUS

Judy Hoff, Senior Safe Schools Coordinator, PFLAG

Jody Huckaby, Executive Director, PFLAG

Kevin Jennings, Executive Director, GLSEN

Jim Johnson, President, Johnson Family Foundation

Kate Kendell, Executive Director, NCLR

Thomas Krever, Deputy Executive Director, Hetrick-Martin Institute

Carolyn Laub, Executive Director, Gay-Straight Alliance Network (CA)

Julie Lienert, Executive Director, GLSEN San Francisco East Bay

Eric Manke, Executive Director, California Safe Schools Coalition

Jody Marksamer, Esq., Staff Attorney, NCLR

David Mensah, Executive Director, Hetrick-Martin Institute

Andrew Park, Senior Philanthropic Advisor, Wellspring Advisors

Beth Reis, Co-Chair, Safe Schools Coalition

Caitlin Ryan, Director, Family Acceptance Project, The César Chávez Institute, San Francisco State University

Ron Schlittler, Deputy Executive Director, PFLAG

R. Bradley Sears, Executive Director, Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law

David Smith, Vice President of Programs, HRC

Tim Sweeney, Program Director, Evelyn & Walter Hass, Jr. Fund

Frieda Takamura, Co-Chair, Safe Schools Coalition

Beth Teper, Executive Director, COLAGE

Shannan Wilber, Executive Director, Legal Services for Children

Rob Woronoff, LGBTQ Services Director, Child Welfare League of America

Paul Yandura, Principal, Scott + Yandura



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