

Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Afterschool Programs and Opposing Anti-LGBTQ+ Attacks



A Briefing Paper

By Sam Piha and Samantha Fasen

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Sam Piha (he/him) has served as founder and president of Temescal Associates since 2007. Sam began his career in 1974 as an afterschool worker, an experience that led to 13 years of classroom teaching and work as a child and family counselor and school social worker. Between 1989 and 2006, Sam managed school-based youth programs at the regional and national levels. He later founded Temescal Associates and The How Kids Learn Foundation, both dedicated to improving the quality of afterschool programs. Sam served as editor and contributing author of several important practice guides and journal articles on afterschool programming. Sam holds a master's degree in Social Welfare.



Samantha Fasen (she/her) joined Temescal Associates and the How Kids Learn Foundation in 2019 and has fully embraced her work with the afterschool field. She helps to coordinate and develop marketing campaigns and multimedia elements to reach a wider audience and share with people the importance of out-of-school time and youth development.



Ren Daraio (they/she) brings over 35 years of experience working in the field of youth development as a facilitator, trainer, and coach. She has experience training and coaching diverse audience groups, from afterschool practitioners and parents to funders and technical assistance providers. Prior to her work with Temescal Associates, Ren was the Deputy Director at the Community Network for Youth Development and a consultant for the Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

[Temescal Associates](#) is dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education and youth development who organizations, and policy makers.

[The How Kids Learn Foundation](#) (HKLF) is a 501(c)(3) organization. It is dedicated to improving the effectiveness of settings that support the education and healthy development of youth. This includes schools and out-of-school time programs. The HKL Foundation provides educational and training activities that promote the capacity of organizations that support the education and healthy development of youth. Examples of activities include conferences, speaker forums, screenings of relevant films, training sessions, coaching sessions, the awarding of digital badges to acknowledge exemplar programs and the learning that happens within these settings. Activities also include the development and distribution of educational materials (papers, self-assessment tools, videos, program guides, etc.). You can see a [catalogue of the resources](#) we've produced for the afterschool field.

Front Cover Photos: Top right photo: *Hart Van Denburg/CPR News*. All other photos from www.pexels.com.

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Source: www.pexels.com

INTRODUCTION

The recent attacks on LGBTQ+ youth in political rhetoric and state house legislation are targeting LGBTQ+ young people, according to the Trevor Project, which ranges from “*censoring LGBTQ-related curriculums and books, banning transgender student-athletes from participating in sports that match their gender identity, to criminalizing doctors and families who support youth with transgender medical care.*”

“Uncivil discourse and hostile political rhetoric have seeped into the nation’s classrooms, leading to declines in support for teaching about race and racism, and sizable growth in harassment of LGBTQ youth, according to a survey of high school principals released this week.” – [Ed Source, Political rancor has had chilling effect on public education, survey finds](#)

In response to the recent attacks on LGBTQ+ youth, we posted several [Learning in Afterschool & Summer \(LIAS\) blogs](#) and authored this briefing paper for afterschool leaders. Even though there are inclusive and progressive politics in some states, afterschool programs in all states across the country do not enjoy this. How can they promote a safe space for all youth amid state efforts to erase the LGBTQ+ community?

“Best estimates suggest that between 7-9% of youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. Using these estimates, the Williams Institute reports that there are approximately 3.2 million LGBTQ youth between the ages of eight and 18, more than half of whom (52%) are youth of color (compared to 39% of LGBTQ adults who are people of color).”
- [Movement Advancement Project](#)

HOW TO USE THIS BRIEFING PAPER

This paper is designed to raise understanding and awareness of the anti-LGBTQ climate and identify ways afterschool leaders can address these issues and support LGBTQ+ youth. We recommend that program leaders share this paper with organizational leaders and program staff and consider the best ways to respond to this.



“We’re learning our colleagues throughout the country are avoiding terms such as, “Social Emotional Learning (SEL)”, “Whole Child,” and any mention of racial or sex/gender equity. This is because these terms are under attack in particular geographies. But we have to recognize that these political attacks on terminology are actually attacks on human beings. I am so proud of so many colleagues I have met throughout the nation that are moving forward by any means necessary, often code-switching to appease politically-motivated decision-makers so they can continue to do the work of creating safe and supportive learning and enrichment environments for all identities.” – Jeff Davis (he/him), Executive Director, [California Afterschool Network](#)

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The definitions provided here are not intended to label youth but rather to assist in understanding some frequently used terms in this paper. Youth may or may not use these terms to describe themselves.

“Language is an extremely powerful tool. It allows us to generate ideas, share stories, and learn and grow from others. Whether spoken, signed, or written, all languages are constantly evolving, and, despite their imperfections, can help us better understand our world and communicate our perspective with others.” – [It Gets Better Project](#)

1. **LGBTQ+:** This stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), and others. The "plus" represents other sexual identities including pansexual and Two-Spirit. The first four letters of the acronym have been used since the 1990s, but in recent years there has been an increased awareness of the need to be inclusive of other sexual identities to offer better representation.
2. **Bisexual:** Bisexual indicates an attraction to all genders. The recognition of bisexual individuals is important, since there have been periods when people who identify as bi have been misunderstood as being gay. Bisexuality has included transgender, binary and nonbinary individuals since the release of the "Bisexual Manifesto" in 1990.
3. **Transgender:** Transgender is a term that indicates that a person's gender identity is different from the gender associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.
4. **Queer or Questioning:** Though queer may be used by people as a specific identity, it is often considered an umbrella term for anyone who is non-cisgender or heterosexual. But it is also a slur. It should not be placed on all members of the community and should only be used by cisgender and heterosexual individuals when referring to a person who explicitly identifies with it. Questioning refers to people who may be unsure of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
5. **+ (Plus):** The 'plus' is used to signify all of the gender identities and sexual orientations that are not specifically covered by the other five initials.
6. **Intersectionality:** According to the [Merriam Webster Dictionary](#), this term is “used to refer to the complex and cumulative way that the effects of different forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, and yes, intersect—especially in the experiences of marginalized people or groups.” To learn more, see [The Trevor Project- What is Intersectionality, Really?](#)

7. *Gender identity*: A person's deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender, regardless of the gender they were assigned at birth. Everyone has a gender identity.
8. *Gender expression*: This refers to the way a person expresses gender, such as clothing, hairstyles, activities, or mannerisms.
9. *Gender nonconforming*: Describes people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations, such as "feminine" boys, "masculine" girls, and those who are perceived as androgynous.
10. *Genders & Sexualities Alliance (GSA)*: Genders & Sexualities Alliances, or GSAs for short, are student-run organizations that unite LGBTQ+ and allied youth to build community and organize around issues impacting them in their schools and communities. GSAs have evolved beyond their traditional role to serve as safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth in middle schools and high schools and have emerged as vehicles for deep social change related to racial, gender, and educational justice.
11. *Nonbinary*: A person whose gender identity does not conform to the gender binary, which is the erroneous idea that only two distinct and opposite genders exist, male and female.
12. *Pronoun*: A word used in place of a name to refer to someone, often in relation to their gender. Gendered pronouns include she/her/hers and he/him/his. (For example, "She marched in the Pride Parade.") Gender-neutral pronouns include they/them/theirs, used in the singular. (For example, "They are a member of the GSA.") There are also neopronouns that include ze/zir/zirs, ey/em/eirs, and per/per/pers, as well as many others. To learn more, see [Pronouns 101 from The Human Rights Campaign](#).
13. *Afterschool programs* - Community-based and school-based youth programs that are conducted before or after the school day and during the summer. These programs are also referred to as afterschool, out-of-school time (OST), youth programs or summer learning programs.

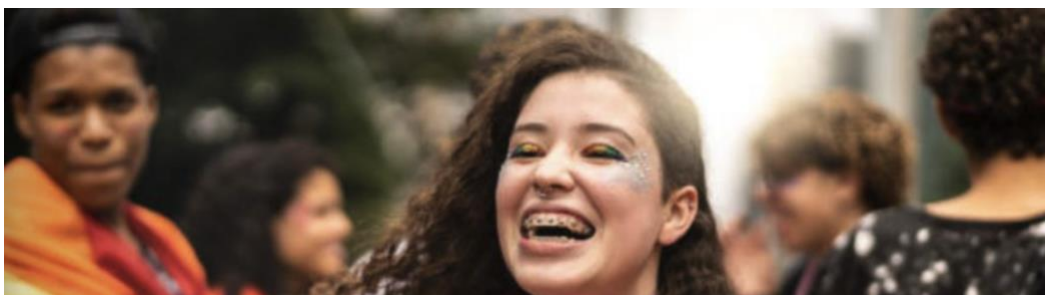
(Definitions 1-5 were drawn from an article by [Kendra Cherry on www.verywellmind.com](#); definitions 7-9 were drawn from an article by the [California Safe School Coalition](#); definition 10 is drawn from <https://gsanetwork.org/what-is-a-gsa/>; definition 10 is drawn from [The Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network](#); definitions 11- 12 were drawn from the [It Gets Better Project](#)).

For more terms and definitions, see the [LGBTQ+ Glossary from the It Gets Better Project](#).

Below we share an article that addresses the importance of afterschool programs creating a safe and inclusive space for all youth. We present more voices from the field on page 20.

A Place for Everyone: Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Out-Of-School Time Organizations

By Guest Contributor, Clarke Hill. (This was originally published by the [National Afterschool Association](#) in the [Spring 2023 Afterschool Today](#) issue.)



Source: [National Afterschool Association](#)

In the world of youth development, very little is simple. More often than not, organizations are up against seemingly insurmountable odds in the fight for a just society for all young people. The battles young people face are everywhere, from mass shootings to global pandemics and crises related to mental health, housing, and extreme economic insecurity to name just a few.

Advocating for LGBTQ+ young people can feel like one of these insurmountable tasks. The Trevor Project reports that in 2022, 45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the previous year, including 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth, as a result of discrimination they faced in school, social gatherings, and at home. That is a staggering statistic.

However, equally as staggering, is the finding that when trans and nonbinary young people have their pronouns respected by the adults in their lives they report suicide attempts at half the rate of other trans and nonbinary youth. In a world of big complex problems, using the correct pronoun is something we can all do without a whole lot of effort. When you start to dig into what else LGBTQ+ youth need to feel safe and supported, it turns out most of that is pretty simple too.

Not only is it simple, out-of-school organizations actually have a unique ability to change those statistics by creating inclusive organizations for all and prioritizing the well-being of their LGBTQ+ youth.

In this country, youth are provided a variety of places to feel safe and included; it is often taken for granted that home, community, church, school, sports teams, etc. are places for youth to find safety. The truth is that for many LGBTQ+ youth these are spaces that have caused trauma. In 2022 the Trevor Project found that only 37% of LGBTQ+ youth identified home as an affirming space and only 55% felt affirmed at school. Schools are often barred from supporting LGBTQ+ youth because of discriminatory policies instituted by school boards or local governments. The safety of one's home is dependent upon the beliefs of one's parents. Out-of-school time organizations often do not have to adhere to the same discriminatory policies and can ensure they are only hiring staff that are accepting and then provide continued training on active inclusion.

One of the easiest things your organization can do is ensure the use of correct pronouns. While it can feel difficult, asking someone for their pronouns and trying your best to use the correct pronouns gets easier as you practice. If you make a mistake and use the wrong pronoun, you can simply apologize and move forward with the correct pronoun. The effort is impactful to the young person even when mistakes are made. The use of they/them pronouns to address a singular person also might feel uncomfortable at first but it is something that we regularly do in the English language. For example, if you walked up to a table at a restaurant and saw a jacket left by a previous customer you might say “oh look, someone left their jacket, I’m going to take it to lost and found for them.” Change can be uncomfortable and adjusting pronoun usage may have some bumps in the road, but in the end, our effort has real potential to reduce suicidal thoughts in young people.



Source: [Afterschool Today Spring 2023](#)

Remember, it is impossible to know everyone’s pronouns just by looking at them; staff can model sharing their pronouns when they introduce themselves and make sure to provide the option to share pronouns when they ask young people to introduce themselves. Additionally, you can offer name tags that have a blank for names and a blank for pronouns. Lastly, you may have seen the term “preferred pronouns” used in the past but the definition of preferred is an adjective to describe something that someone likes better than something else. If they were preferred pronouns, it means that other pronouns are acceptable to use which is not the case. Again, the youth development field faces big complex problems, but this is a solution with relatively low effort and extremely high impact.

The lynchpin to creating an inclusive organization is ensuring your staff have received training specific to working with LGBTQ+ youth. Luckily, there are many fantastic resources that can help your organization with education:

1. [The Trevor Project - Support Center Glossary](#)
2. [The Trevor Project - Guide to Being an Ally](#)
3. [GLSEN - Gender Affirming & Inclusive Athletics](#)
4. [The Safe Zone Project - Learn](#)
5. [Human Rights Campaign - Schools in Transition](#)

MORE ABOUT...



Clarke Hill (She/Her) is the Principal and Founder of *Clarke Hill Consulting* and Co-Founder of [Queer Connect](#). Clarke is a non-profit consultant with over 20 years of experience and her areas of focus as a consultant are non-profit organizational development, youth development, quality improvement, and data-driven DEI. She has worked with organizations across the country such as *Boys and Girls Clubs of America*, *Washington Charters Association*, *Neighborhood House*, and the *Forum for Youth Investment*. She also worked with government institutions including the Centers for Disease Control, King County, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

KNOW THE FACTS: LGBTQ+ YOUTH ARE AT HIGHER RISK



Source: www.pexels.com

We know that LGBTQ+ youth are more vulnerable when compared to other youth. They are:

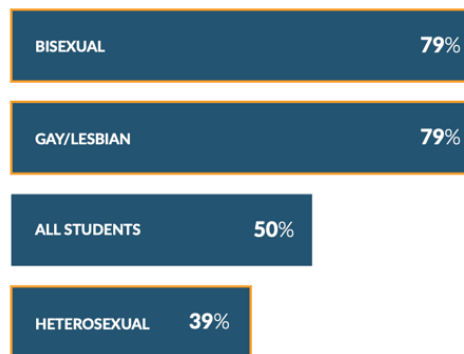


Source: [The Lies and Dangers of Efforts to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity](#)

LGBTQ youth are at risk for family rejection, homelessness, discrimination and bullying at school, and harmful so-called "conversion therapy" practices. They are also at higher risk for experiences leading to learning obstacles, bullying, and higher rates of depression, stress, anxiety, and suicidal thinking and behavior. To raise awareness, we cite some findings from [Youth Truth: Emotional and Mental Health](#):

On Obstacles to Learning: *"Sexual orientation matters when considering obstacles to learning, particularly for middle school students. At the middle-school level, gay or lesbian students (79 percent) and bisexual students (79 percent) report at more than double the percentage of their heterosexual classmates (39 percent) that depression, stress, and anxiety impede their learning."*

Depression, Stress, and Anxiety as an Obstacle to Learning by Sexual Orientation



Source: [Youth Truth: Emotional and Mental Health](#)

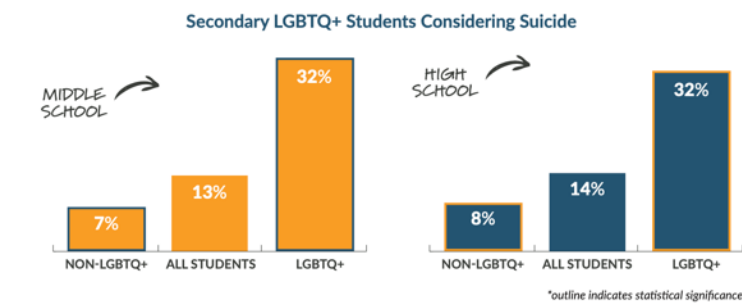
On Bullying: *“Over a quarter of our youngest secondary students identify bullying as a top five obstacle to learning... For gender non-binary and LGBTQ+ youth, bullying is a formidable weight that adds to their overall obstacle- to-learning load.*

The only high school group to report at a significantly larger percentage than the overall (8 percent) that bullying is an obstacle to learning are non- binary students (17 percent). And at the middle-school level the only two groups to report that bullying is an obstacle to learning at a significantly higher rate than the overall (19 percent) are LGBTQ+ students (27 percent) and non-binary students (34 percent).”

“... recent politics and ongoing crises facing the globe can have a real, negative impact on LGBTQ young people, a group consistently found to be at significantly increased risk for depression, anxiety, and attempting suicide because of how they are mistreated and stigmatized in society,” said Amit Paley, CEO & Executive Director of The Trevor Project.” - [Josh Weaver, The Trevor Project](#)

On Suicidality: *“While there is no significant difference in reporting rates by grade level or by race, there are alarming differences by gender identity and LGBTQ+ status. A full 32 percent of LGBTQ+ middle school students report that they have considered suicide, four and half times higher than their non-LGBTQ+ peers (7 percent). And this pattern holds in high school where again 32 percent of LGBTQ+ students report that they have seriously considered suicide compared to their peers (8 percent).”*

“LGBTQ youth are not inherently prone to suicide risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but rather placed at higher risk because of how they are stigmatized and mistreated in society” - [Facts About LGBTQ Youth Suicide, The Trevor Project](#)

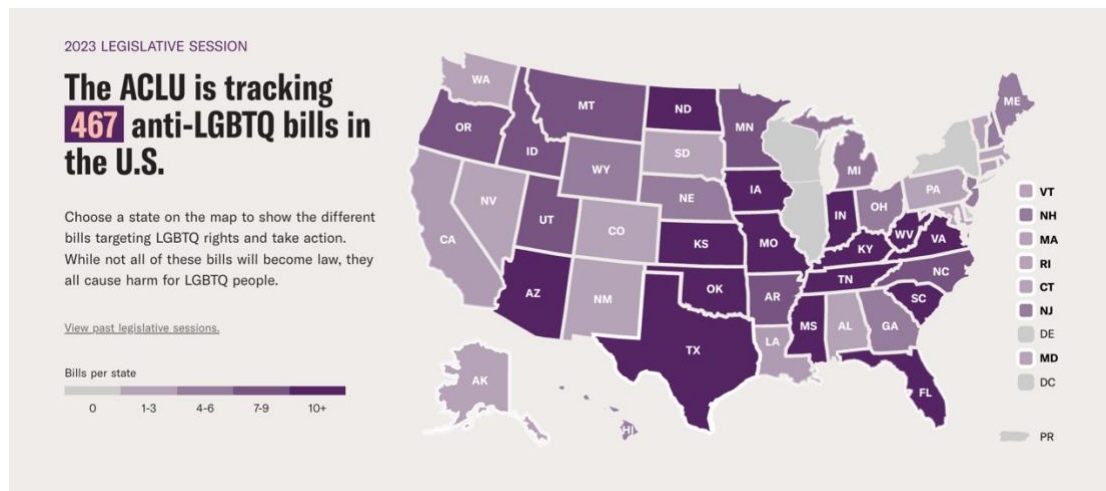


Source: [Youth Truth: Emotional and Mental Health](#)

It is important to note that LGBTQ+ youth are also uniquely resilient and build amazing support structures for themselves.



STAY INFORMED ABOUT ANTI-LGBTQ+ STATE LEGISLATION



According to the [Movement Advancement Project](#), those who wish to erase LGBTQ+ people from schools & public life are using many tactics to accomplish their goals which include:

- *“So-Called ‘Don’t Say Gay or Trans’ Curriculum Censorship & Book Bans*
- *School Policies Preventing Transgender Youth from Being Themselves & Equally Accessing School Spaces & Activities*
- *Removing Anti-Bullying & Harassment Protections for LGBTQ Student*
- *Outlawing & Even Criminalizing Supportive School Environments, Including Firing or Suing Teachers*
- *Rewarding & Protecting Anti-LGBTQ Teachers*
- *Pulling Out of Longstanding School Survey Efforts*
- *Purging Public Libraries*
- *Regulating Drag Shows”*

“Young people are scared. And angry. Especially trans, nonbinary, and gender expansive youth who have to witness nearly daily attacks on their rights to affirming medical care, and participation in athletic programs. More broadly, LGBTQ+ youth are actively being told they are not welcome in their home and school communities as their full and authentic selves - this is gravely impacting their mental and emotional health.” - Nat Duran, Co-Founder & Facilitator, Constellation Collective, Chicago, IL

The Public Broadcasting Service and PBS News Hour has been very active in tracking anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Click on the image below to view an interview with the Montana transgender legislator, Zoey Zephyr, who was recently barred from the Montana House floor (4/26/23).



Source: PBS News Hour

By way of examples, we list several articles regarding proposed anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, by topic. They were written by National Public Radio and others. If you click on the title, it will take you to the original article. (NOTE: These articles were collected during the writing of this paper, but things are changing daily.)

SCHOOLS

[“Don’t Say Period”: Now Florida wants to ban students from discussing menstruation](#)

April 11, 2023 • Florida’s “Don’t Say Period” bill can’t stop the menstrual wave.

[Florida Senate passes a controversial school’s bill labeled 'Don't Say Gay' by critics](#)

March 8, 2022 • Florida's Senate passed a bill Tuesday that aims to limit discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity in schools. Gov. Ron DeSantis has signaled support for the legislation.

[Texas attorney general says Austin school Pride Week celebration breaks state law](#)

March 25, 2022 • Austin's school district holds events to celebrate LGBTQIA+ students every year. Attorney General Ken Paxton says, "when it comes to sex education, parents—not school districts—are in charge."



Source: [GLSEN](#)

[Principal forced to resign after students shown picture of Michelangelo’s David](#)

March 24, 2023 • One parent complained that a Renaissance art lesson was “pornographic.”

[School district bans kids from singing Dolly Parton & Miley Cyrus song because it mentions rainbows](#)

March 27, 2023 • The school also tried to ban a Kermit the Frog song.

See [Safe Schools Laws from The Movement Advancement Project](#).



Source: [www.pexels.com](#)

SPORTS

[South Carolina becomes the latest state to enact a transgender sports ban](#)

May 17, 2022 • South Carolina's governor signed into law a bill that would ban transgender students from playing girls' or women's sports in public schools and colleges.

[Utah bans transgender athletes in girls sports despite governor's veto](#)

March 25, 2022 • Lawmakers voted to override GOP Gov. Spencer Cox's veto of legislation banning transgender youth athletes from playing on girls teams. The move comes amid a nationwide culture war over trans issues.

[Transgender girls and women now barred from female sports in Iowa](#)

IOWA PUBLIC RADIO NEWS March 3, 2022 • The ban takes effect immediately. The ban applies to K-12 schools and community colleges as well as colleges and universities that are part of the NCAA or NAIA.

[The Chicago Blackhawks cancel a pride-themed warm-up citing Vladimir Putin](#)

March 24, 2023 • Russia's gay propaganda law creeps into the National Hockey League.

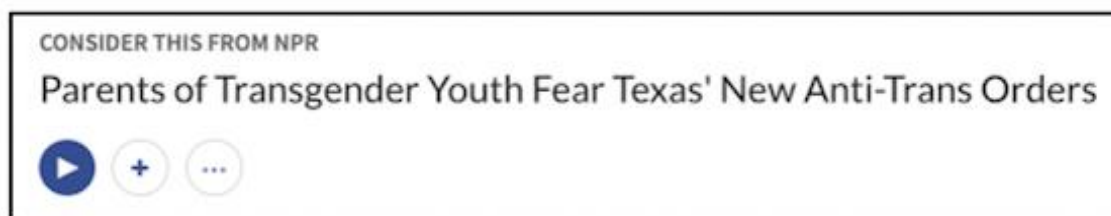
CRIMINALIZING LGBTQ+ YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

[Texas Supreme Court OKs state child abuse inquiries into the families of trans kids](#)

May 13, 2022 • The ruling overturns an injunction barring state officials from following Abbott's directive to view treatments such as hormones and puberty-blocking drugs as incidents of child abuse.

[Alabama Legislature votes to ban gender-affirming medical care for transgender youth](#)

April 7, 2022 • State lawmakers also passed a separate measure prohibiting early classroom instruction on sexual and gender identity, a bill critics have dubbed "Don't Say Gay."



HEALTHCARE

[Alabama is using the case that ended Roe to argue it can ban gender-affirming care](#)

July 3, 2022 • The case marks one of the first known instances in which a conservative state has tried to apply the abortion ruling to other realms, just as LGBTQ advocates and others were afraid would happen.



Source: [Gabriel C. Pérez/KUT, npr.org](#)

“Our trans youth who have been under gender-affirming care have been dropped from their doctors. We are hearing that a lot of doctors are worried about losing their licenses even though it's legal for youth who have been grandfathered in. This loss of treatment has been devastating for our youth and families.” - Rex Barnes, Youth & Family Services Coordinator
Compass LGBTQ+ Community Center, Lake Worth Beach, FL

[Can states limit abortion and gender-affirming treatments outside their borders?](#)

March 15, 2022 • Building on SB 8 in Texas, some Republican lawmakers are trying a new strategy: pushing bills that would attempt to limit what residents can and can't do even beyond state lines.

See [Bans on Best Practice Medical Care for Transgender Youth by the Movement Advancement Project](#).

BANNING OF BOOKS, MUSIC, AND ART



Source: [National Public Radio](#)

[These kids' authors are telling the stories of trans youth. Book bans won't stop them.](#)

March 31, 2022 • As lawmakers push forward with efforts to curb the rights of queer and trans youth, authors who've written about gender expansive and trans identities say storytelling is crucial.

“Students must understand the history of various groups to have a respectful, evidence-based dialogue to help build a diverse democracy, according to the report.” – [Diana Lambert, Are Kids Collateral Damage in California Culture Wars](#)

SOME PUSH BACK

[School Sports Cannot 'Categorically' Ban Transgender Athletes, Under Biden Proposal](#)

April 6, 2023 • The proposed rules would give schools flexibility for “fairness in competition” or where participation could lead to injury.

[A Transgender Student Moved Cross-Country for a Welcoming School. Here's Their Story](#)

February 27, 2023 • Dandelion Hunt-Smith moved across the country with their family from Columbus, Ga., to San Francisco for their senior year of high school in search of a welcoming school.

[A judge has blocked a Texas investigation of one transgender teen's parents](#)

March 2, 2022 • Judge's order stops short of preventing the state from looking into other reports about children receiving similar care.

[A judge blocks part of an Alabama law that criminalizes gender-affirming medication](#)

May 14, 2022 • The federal judge issued a preliminary injunction while a court challenge goes forward. The judge left in place other parts of the law that banned gender-affirming surgeries.

[Governors in Indiana and Utah veto transgender sports bans](#)

March 22, 2022 • Eleven states have enacted transgender sports bans, though many have been snarled by lawsuits.

[A Texas judge blocks the state from investigating parents of transgender youth](#)

THE TEXAS NEWSROOM, March 11, 2022 • The judge halted the state from enforcing Gov. Greg Abbott's directive to launch "child abuse" investigations against parents getting gender-affirming care for their transgender children.

[After protests, Disney CEO speaks out against Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' bill](#)

March 8, 2022 • Disney CEO Bob Chapek says the company will pledge five million dollars to groups "working to protect" LGBTQ+ rights. The Human Rights Campaign says it won't take Disney's money.

"Not only is it simple, out-of-school organizations actually have a unique ability to change those statistics by creating inclusive organizations for all and prioritizing the well-being of their LGBTQ+ youth." – [Clarke Hill, Co-Founder of Queer Connect, Vermont](#)

LGBTQ+ YOUTH HAVE RIGHTS



Source: [ACLU NorCal](#)

It's important to know that there are federal and in some cases, state laws, that protect LGBTQ+ youth from harassment and restrictions. State protections vary from state to state. Below is a brief review of LGBTQ+ youth rights by the [ACLU and GLSEN](#) (last updated May 2018):

"You have the right to be yourself! Here is some basic information about LGBTQ students' legal rights in public schools.

- **Freedom of Expression:** Some schools try to silence students who express their opinions about LGBTQ issues. If you go to a public school, you have a constitutional right to express your views and identity.
- **Gay-Straight Alliances or Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs):** A GSA is a noncurricular student-led club -- just like Chess Club or Fellowship of Christian Athletes -- for students with a shared interest in LGBTQ issues. Federal law requires public high schools that allow any other noncurricular clubs to allow GSAs and treat them no differently from other clubs.
- **School Dances:** Public schools can't stop you from bringing a same-sex date to prom or homecoming who otherwise is allowed to attend, nor can they tell you that you can't dress a certain way or run for prom king/queen because it doesn't fit traditional gender roles.
- **Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students:** Transgender and gender nonconforming students often face discrimination over dress codes, access to restrooms and locker rooms, and their chosen names and pronouns. Contact the ACLU LGBT Project if you want help making sure your school treats you with respect and keeps you safe.

- **Harassment:** *If you're being harassed or threatened, go to the principal or another official right away. Keep detailed notes with dates of all incidents. Put the school on notice that it has to protect you.*
- **Privacy:** *Schools should not out you to anyone without your permission, even if you're out to some people at school."*

The [NORCAL ACLU](#) adds:

"If you suspect that your school is mistreating you because of your sexual orientation or gender identity, here are some basic rules to help you out:

- *Be respectful and follow the rules!*
- *Don't give your school any excuses for treating you badly by behaving badly yourself. This can make things harder to solve in the long run. Explain your grievances in a mature, respectable and respectful manner.*
- *Document everything!*
- *Keep a record of the 'Six Ws' each time you are harassed:*
 - *WHO was involved,*
 - *WHAT happened,*
 - *WHERE it happened,*
 - *WHEN it happened,*
 - *WHO you reported it to, whether they did anything about it, and when,*
 - *And if there were any WITNESSES.*

Keep copies of anything in writing that you file with the school and be sure to write down the date (or even better, ask them to stamp it as received, with the date). Also take notes about any additional conversations you have with school administrators and any actions they take (or fail to take) and be sure to write down the dates for those too.

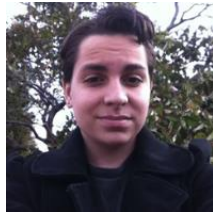
File a complaint! *Your school is required by law to have a clear and publicized process for filing complaints of harassment. If the process is not posted around campus like it should be, ask what this process is, and follow it—you may also remind your school of their obligation to post these materials. Your school must keep your identity confidential and protect you from retaliation."*

For more information or assistance, you can contact your local and/or the national ACLU.

VOICES OF OTHERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

YOUTH VOICE

You Can't "De-Gay" Our GSA



By Joshua Kilburn (This was written when Joshua was in high school, originally published by the [Texas ACLU](#)).

My school, South Garland High School in Garland, Texas, is really large and diverse. It's also right outside of Dallas, so it's not like the fact that gay people exist is something new here. But I do still sometimes hear the word "faggot" thrown around in the hallway. Sometimes it can be a scary place to be gay.

That's why I decided to start a [Gay-Straight Alliance](#). GSAs can provide a safe space for LGBT students and their friends to be who they are without having to hear that kind of thing. They make schools a safer place for everyone, and thankfully, they're in thousands of schools all over the country and have been around since the 1990s.

With over 2,000 students here, it's not surprising that we have more than 50 different student clubs and organizations. There are cultural groups like Sabor Latino and religious clubs like Fellowship of Christian Athletes. And, there are all sorts of clubs that are just about things people are interested in like: Table-Top Gaming Club, Fashion Club, Chess Club, and Comedy Improv Troupe. With so many clubs at our school, my friends and I didn't think getting approval for a GSA would be a problem at all.

We lined up four faculty sponsors who were willing to help us out and came up with a plan to call our club the PRIDE (Promoting Relationships In Diversity Education) GSA. We planned a bunch of activities like a Rainbow Day in the spring when we'd all wear rainbow t-shirts and have a little pride party after school with snacks and music. One of the first things we wanted to do this semester was [Ally Week](#). Created by the Network (GLSEN), it's a time to talk about how we can all be better allies to LGBT students while helping to fight bullying and harassment.

There was some confusion while we were trying to make plans for the year, and for a while there we thought the school wasn't going to let us call it a Gay-Straight Alliance, so the name would have to be just PRIDE. We also were told it shouldn't be about LGBT stuff, but more of a general diversity club, doing stuff about Latino American culture and Black History Month even though there are already clubs that celebrate those things. And we were under the impression that we couldn't have Rainbow Day or Ally Week.

I went to the [GLSEN](#) website looking for help, and that's when I found a link to the [ACLU's resources for LGBT students](#). I learned that federal law says that if a public school allows any noncurricular clubs like Table-Top Gaming Club or Fellowship of Christian Athletes, then it can't say no when students want to start other noncurricular clubs like a GSA. The school also can't act like it's allowing a GSA and then just de-gay everything about our club – including the name. And best of all, I found out [how to contact the ACLU for help](#).

So that's why the [ACLU LGBT Project](#) and the [ACLU of Texas](#) worked with my school district last week to make sure they understood we have the legal right to form a club with GSA in the name and talk about LGBT issues. And, it was a big relief when the school told us that we could do all of the things

we'd hoped for, including hosting Ally Week and Rainbow Day. More importantly, I learned that we had a right to equality, and I wasn't alone.

All we want is to make South Garland High School a safer school, not just for LGBT students but for everyone. We're glad our school has decided to become an ally, too, and help us make that happen, especially to take the "scary" away from being gay at South Garland High.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Below we present some views expressed by afterschool practitioners and LGBTQ+ advocates.

Four Things to Remember About Supporting LGBTQ Youth

By Guest Contributor, Eileen Wise, a youth development specialist at Penn State Better Kid Care and primary author of the [National Afterschool Association \(NAA\)](#), *Professional Youth Development* series. This blog was originally published by the [NAA](#).



Source: National Afterschool Association

1. Know basic facts about gender and sexual orientation.

Even if you're a sensitive and caring youth development professional, there may be some things you don't know about the LGBTQ—gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning—community. For example: What is the difference between gender identity and gender expression? Is using the word "queer" a sign of being well-informed or is it an insult to an individual who is LGBTQ? Why is it important to be able to talk about gender in a "non-binary" way?

We know that a small but significant number of children in our care will grow up to become gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning—about 5 percent of children, according to statistics. For any group of children of about 20 or more, there will be at least one child developing as a sexual minority. Like all children, they need our respect, understanding and support.

[The National Afterschool Association \(NAA\) Code of Ethics](#) calls on all youth development professionals to support all types of diverse youth, including LGBTQ youth.

To be truly supportive, youth development professionals need to learn the basic facts about diversity in gender and sexual orientation. A new online learning module titled [*"Supporting LGBTQ Youth"*](#) is available to support this need. The book [*The ABC's of LGBT+*](#) is another helpful resource. When you make the effort to know the facts and vocabulary, youth are more likely to feel you genuinely care and will begin to trust you.

2. Realize how important you are.

Children as young as 5 years old may begin to feel uncomfortable about their identity as a male or female, and it's common for children to become aware of their sexual orientation as they enter puberty. What this means is that some children may experience feelings of being different from the norm in their gender and sexual orientation throughout their elementary years. Minority youth are listening and watching our expressions, dress, and body language. They are "reading" us all the time, because we are trusted role models and respected authority figures.

Afterschool and out-of-school programs can provide a safe haven for gender and sexual orientation minority youth when they implement these elements:

- Create a welcoming atmosphere.
- Establish behavior guidelines.
- Promote inclusion.
- Call out discriminatory speech and actions.
- Apply consequences consistently.

When you recognize your authority and take charge of the out-of-school program space, you are giving gender and sexual orientation minority youth the room to feel safe, accepted, and able to explore their identities.

3. Know it's OK to make mistakes.

We have all been socialized to think and speak in a binary way about gender. We may be in the habit of addressing a group of children as "boys and girls." We may have grown up dividing children into groups or teams by gender. We may also be used to remarking about how an article of clothing or a person looks "pretty" or "handsome."

These types of expressions and habits can be off-putting to LGBTQ youth. They can signal that adult professionals are not really understanding the effects of their words on gender and sexual orientation minority youth. However, if youth development professionals can catch themselves and correct their statements into a gender-neutral way of speaking, this can make a big difference to youth. Youth are forgiving if they see we are trying to be more inclusive and understanding. When you make a mistake, quickly apologize and correct your speech or action. Youth will realize that you are sincerely learning and trying, and they will accept and appreciate your efforts.

4. Really listen to young people.

We can learn a lot about the concerns and issues facing youth by asking questions and listening to their answers. Youth culture changes quickly, and the trends and jargon among LGBTQ youth may change even more quickly. Often, books and articles cannot keep pace with the facts on the ground.

For those of us who work on a daily basis with children and youth, our ability to "really listen" may be our most important skill. By listening intently and with open minds and hearts we may be able to tune in to LGBTQ youth who are suffering from stress and rejection at home, at school or in their neighborhoods. We may be the lifeline they desperately need to grow beyond what they are experiencing today and to

ultimately realize their full potentials. Our ability to listen intently and respond with care may be a lifeline for LGBTQ youth.

References: Mardell, Ashley. 2016. The ABC's of LGBT+. Mango Media Inc.; Penn State Better Kid Care. "Supporting LGBTQ Youth." Online professional development module.



Our Resolution: Defeat Anti-LGBTQ Bills in 2023

By: Guest Contributor, Ryan Bernstein (he/him), Senior Managing Editor, The Trevor Project
(This was originally published by [The Trevor Project](#))



Source: [The Trevor Project](#)

As we start a new year, we enter a hostile political landscape for LGBTQ young people in states across America. In 2022, 220 anti-LGBTQ bills were considered in a majority of states across the country — a record number. In 2023, this trend is set to continue, as state houses around America are considering legislation that targets LGBTQ young people, ranging from censoring LGBTQ-related curriculums and books, banning transgender student-athletes from participating in sports that match their gender identity, and criminalizing doctors and families who support youth with transgender medical care.

That's the bad news. However, there is reason for optimism: nearly 90% of harmful bills considered in 2022 were defeated by LGBTQ advocates and allies.

These wins don't just happen organically. They're a result of targeted grassroots efforts of educating legislators about the real impacts and harm these policies cause. We know that to many families, the prospect of another tough year is daunting. For those new to LGBTQ advocacy, joining in to defend our young people can seem overwhelming. Our best power and momentum lies when we stay informed and work together. So, at the Trevor Project we're making a New Year's resolution to support advocates in state legislatures across the country who are standing up for LGBTQ youth, especially trans and nonbinary youth. We hope you'll join us.

As an advocate for LGBTQ rights, it's important to stay informed about these bills and to be ready to take action to fight back against them. Here are some steps you can take to make a difference:

Stay informed: Follow news about LGBTQ issues in your state and around the country. Sign up for newsletters or alerts from organizations like The Trevor Project or the ACLU and follow their social media accounts to stay up-to-date on the latest developments.

Get involved: Find a state or local organization that's working to fight back against these bills. Consider joining their efforts and getting involved in their campaigns. Volunteering your time, donating money, or even just sharing information on social media can make a difference. You can find local organizations [here](#).

Reach out to your legislators: Remember that politics is local. If you live in a state where an anti-LGBTQ bill is being considered, reach out to your state legislators and let them know how you feel. You can do this through email, phone, or even by writing a postcard or letter. Make sure to explain why the bill is harmful and why you oppose it. You can even visit them at their offices to have a face-to-face conversation with their staff. You can find your state legislator [here](#).

Watch hearings and state legislative sessions: As these bills are being debated, they often go through a public hearing process. Find out where and when these bills are being discussed and show up or [watch them online](#). Let the legislators know that there is an audience that doesn't agree with these harmful bills. Remember that politicians want to be re-elected. Presence is pressure.

Educate others: One of the most powerful things you can do to protect LGBTQ young people is to speak to the people in your life about why these bills are so harmful. Visit our [Resource Center](#) to find guides and educational materials. Remember, you don't have to have all the correct language to make a difference. You just have to speak from your heart and practice empathy. If you have a platform or writing skills, you can also contact local publications to write op-eds or letters to the editor about these issues.

The Trevor Project is fighting every day for a more inclusive world for LGBTQ young people, but we can't do it alone. We all have the power to change hearts and minds through people-to-people conversations, local and state advocacy, and the ballot box. Make a resolution this year to stay involved and ensure that we defeat as many of these harmful bills as possible.

MORE ABOUT...



Ryan Bernsten (he/him) is the Senior Managing Editor at The Trevor Project, a suicide prevention and mental health organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people.



The Trevor Project's mission is to end suicide among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning young people. Their vision is a world where all LGBTQ young people see a bright future for themselves.

VOICES OUTSIDE THE BUBBLE

When it comes to LGBTQ+ issues, those of us in California live in somewhat of a progressive bubble. To learn more, we interviewed leaders residing outside of California to hear their views.

Why is the attack on LGBTQ+ youth happening now?

"Attacks on LGBTQ+ youth are nothing new, but the sheer number of bills introduced this year that are designed to remove rights and protections for LGBTQ+ people is staggering. As of May 1st, 2023, the [ACLU is tracking 469 anti-LGBTQ+ bills](#) introduced in the country since January, a record which more than doubles the number of bills introduced in all of 2022. The [Equality Federation](#) puts the total number at over 500. The good news is that advocates, much like our team at Equality NC, worked together to defeat nearly 90% of the harmful bills considered in 2022.



Source: www.pexels.com

These bills are based on mis/dis/malinformation and mischaracterization of transgender and LGBTQ+ people. Many of the bills introduced include bill text which is based on false information about fairness, societal dangers, and fear-based tactics to attack the most marginalized of our community. As we've seen the number of anti-LGBTQ+ bills increase since 2018, we've seen steady trends in attempts to strip rights away from LGBTQ+ youth and adults, such as prohibiting access to gender-affirming care for transgender youth and young adults, banning transgender students from playing on sports teams, forcing school educators and state employees to "out" LGBTQ youth, and limiting topics in school curriculum relating to race, equity, gender, LGBTQ+ topics, and systemic inequities and oppression." - Brennan Lewis, North Carolina

What impact do you think the current political attacks are having on the LGBTQ+ youth community and the programs that serve them?

"The impact happening now is that our trans youth who have been under gender-affirming care have been dropped from their doctors. We are hearing that a lot of doctors are worried about losing their licenses even though it's legal for youth who have been grandfathered in. This loss of treatment has been devastating for our youth and families." – Rex Barnes, Florida

"Young people are scared. And angry. Especially trans, nonbinary, and gender expansive youth who have to witness nearly daily attacks on their rights to affirming medical care, and participation in athletic programs. More broadly, LGBTQ+ youth are actively being told they are not welcome in their home and

school communities as their full and authentic selves - this is gravely impacting their mental and emotional health.” – Nat Duran, Illinois

“Youth in the LGBTQ+ community are likely feeling unsafe and uncertain about the people in the community around them, unsure about how people are going to treat them. Even if they have safe spaces and trusted people they go to, others in those settings could create uncertain environments where youth don’t feel safe and supported. This vulnerability can lead youth to disengage from programs that are there to support them. Living daily with the stress and anxiety of knowing that other people in and around your own community are legislating against you or forming policy that is intended to limit your ability to live your life securely and equally just because of who you are, can be devastating and a continuous source of depression and pain. Young people and the programs that support them can feel targeted and experience unresolvable anger and hopelessness.

Additionally, LGBTQ+ youth are dealing with a heightened prevalence of mental health concerns, further exacerbated by the pandemic, and compounded now by an uptick in targeted attacks toward their community. According to the Trevor Project (2022), 73% of LGBTQ youth reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety, 58% experienced symptoms of depression, and 45% considered suicide in the past year. These experiences can make it both more difficult for youth to participate successfully in programming, as well as for staff to meet their needs as their experiences may be more than the program is equipped to address. Programs may face challenges in areas where policies and legislation discriminating against LGBTQ+ communities threaten to impact funding and even what can be taught or discussed within programming.” – Patricia McGuinness, Massachusetts

“LGBTQ+ youth across the country are significantly impacted by the introduction of anti-LGBTQ legislation. According to the [results of a national survey](#) of LGBTQ youth ages 13 to 24, released on May 1st by the [Trevor Project](#), almost two thirds of respondents reported that "hearing about potential state or local laws banning people from discussing LGBTQ people at school (also known as 'Don't Say Gay') made their mental health a lot worse." Mental health impacts on transgender youth are exacerbated by high numbers of bills specifically targeting gender-affirming care, participation of transgender youth athletes in school sports teams, and protections for LGBTQ youth in K-12 schools.

For organizations and educators serving LGBTQ young people, it can be difficult to navigate the rapidly changing policy landscape. In states like [Florida](#), where the state Board of Education approved a ban on classroom instruction about sexual orientation and gender identity in all grades, some LGBTQ teachers and allies have [moved out of state or left the profession entirely](#) amidst confusion and backlash caused by the policy. [21% of the LGBTQ population in the U.S.](#) lives in a state that censors discussions of LGBTQ people or issues in schools (known as “Don’t Say Gay” policies), and more states are considering similar bills this legislative session.” – Brennan Lewis, North Carolina

How can we support LGBTQ+ youth in the midst of these attacks?

“Converse with the community! Educate those who are not aware of the harmful laws that are being placed and help them understand that this will not stop with us; this goes beyond our community. Reassure the youth that you will do your part and actively engage to do better for their community.” – Rex Barnes, Florida

“Be a visible advocate and accomplice. Demonstrate you’re a supportive person by introducing yourself with your pronouns, incorporating LGBTQ+ themes and figures into your programming, and allowing space for them to process their feelings. Know and share local resources and supports and find ways for them to connect to others who share their identities.” – Nat Duran, Illinois

What can we do to promote pro LGBTQ+ policy and youth program practice?

“Contact local organizations in your region or state that combat current legislators who are trying to silence our voices, and ask them how you can get involved-whether by donating, spreading awareness, or even participating in marches.” – Rex Barnes, Florida

“Assess programmatic policies and procedures for gender inclusive language and practices - including dress codes, and gender segregated spaces. Learn how to make as many options available to all participants and let them choose their own adventure. Create regular mechanisms to get feedback from youth to ensure they feel affirmed as they move throughout your program. Connect with local LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations to stay informed about local policy changes (including school boards, local government, etc.) and advocacy asks.” – Nat Duran, Illinois

“Programs can support LGBTQ+ youth by affirming them and creating inclusive spaces in which youth feel safe. Programs can provide spaces that affirm youths’ identities, using preferred pronouns and names, providing materials that represent identities of youth, addressing issues of discrimination openly and immediately when they happen. Inclusive materials can range from providing a variety of identities on a registration form to including members of the LGBTQ+ community in curriculum. Programs can further support LGBTQ+ youth by having explicit messages in program spaces that affirm that all young people are welcome and respected and creating spaces and opportunities for supportive and educational discussions led by experts that involve youth, staff, program leaders, and families. Programs should be educating their staff about appropriate ways to support LGBTQ+ youth from learning the vocabulary, acknowledging mistakes through training and conversation. Finally, be that caring adult and listen. LGBTQ+ youth, like their peers, want to feel heard and listening without judgment can be what they need to feel supported.” – Patricia McGuinness, Massachusetts

“Everyone can take a step, large or small, to fight for LGBTQ+ rights and affirming policies in their community. In the K-12 school setting, educators, school support staff, and afterschool program leaders play a vital role in both directly supporting LGBTQ+ youth and advocating for better policies.

LGBTQ+ youth need to feel seen, heard, and loved for who they are – just like any other young person. We know that having just one affirming adult in an LGBTQ+ young person’s life is correlated with a [40% lower likelihood of reporting a suicide attempt](#) in the past year. When LGBTQ+ young people don’t feel safe or supported at home, their only access to forming positive relationships with adults who uplift and affirm their identities is often at school or in an afterschool program. People working in the afterschool space can access resources from [GLSEN](#) and local providers of Safe Zone/Safe Space trainings to learn more about being a strong advocate for LGBTQ+ youth.

K-12 school staff and afterschool program leaders also play an important role in setting the tone for LGBTQ+ inclusion at a local level. Folks who work on the ground and in the classroom with young people can directly address anti-LGBTQ+ bullying, proactively introduce positive representations of queer and transgender people in programming, and provide LGBTQ+ young people with access to resources and direct services to improve their health outcomes and help them to feel included. People who work with LGBTQ+ youth can also monitor their local school board meetings and advocate for best practice policies like introducing school [Gender Support Plans](#), updating [school dress codes](#), and making sure transgender students have access to [restrooms and locker rooms](#) matching their gender identity. There are lots of other ways that individuals can take action to stop these harmful bills. The Trevor Project has a great list of opportunities to get involved [here](#).” – Brennan Lewis, North Carolina

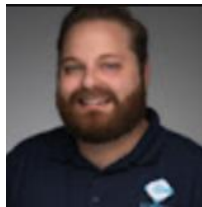
Who is responsible for these attacks? And who in the afterschool leadership realm is speaking out?

“Culturally conservative community members on the far right have been organizing for decades now against bodily autonomy. Queer and trans youth leadership programs (such as [Gender Justice Leadership Programs](#)) and [GSA networks](#) across the country are leading efforts to protect, uplift, and support LGBTQ+ young people.” – Nat Duran, Illinois

“Many of the attacks on the LGBTQ+ community are a coordinated effort by far-right national political organizations like the Alliance Defending Freedom and Moms for Liberty. The [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) tracks these organizations as anti-LGBTQ hate groups.

National LGBTQ+ organizations like the [GSA Network](#) and [GLSEN](#) offer invaluable resources for afterschool leaders and educators to better support LGBTQ+ students and take action against harmful policy at the state and local level.” – Brennan Lewis, North Carolina

MORE ABOUT...



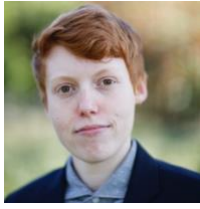
Rex Barnes (he/they) is the Youth & Family Services Coordinator at [Compass LGBTQ+ Community Center](#) in Lake Worth Beach, Florida. Compass is one of the largest gay and lesbian community centers in Florida and the Southeast United States and one of the largest and most respected of its kind in the nation. More than 25,000 people utilize its 14,000 square foot facility, and more than 17,000 referrals are fielded by more than 12,000 volunteer hours graciously contributed by hundreds of community-centered individuals each year.



Nat Duran (they/them) is a compassion-led and dedicated educator focused on community building and social justice across various realms of youth work. Nat has been a champion for putting youth voice to action throughout their career within school, housing, and advocacy settings; most recently they served as the Youth Engagement Manager for the *Illinois Safe Schools Alliance* providing statewide leadership for the safer schools movement. In addition to their role at Constellation Collective, Nat teaches within the *Youth Development Masters* program at University of Illinois at Chicago.



Patricia McGuinness-Carmichael MSW (she/her) is a Research Associate at the [National Institute on Out-of-School Time \(NIOST\)](#). Patricia has an extensive background in youth development and family engagement practice, research, and evaluation. She has worked in school and community based out-of-school time (OST) programs, creating and facilitating Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curricula, and coaching OST programs to integrate SEL into their everyday practices. Patricia participated as a *National After School Matters Fellow* contributing to research in the OST field. She has a background in evaluation of education initiatives, such as *Reading First* in South Carolina, treatment programs with *Children’s Hospital Boston*, and OST programs in and around Boston. As a Licensed Certified Social Worker (LCSW), Patricia began her career in the mental health and juvenile justice field before focusing on roles in prevention.



Brennan Lewis (they/them) is [Equality North Carolina](#)'s Education Policy Associate. They manage Equality NC's programs serving youth, students, and families, including the statewide Rural Youth Empowerment Fellowship. Previously, they served as the Regional Manager for the U.S. & Canada at Peace First, a global nonprofit that coaches and funds young people to create social action projects. Through work with Peace First, Equality NC, and as the founder of the Raleigh-based LGBTQ youth group QueerNC. Brennan is dedicated to mobilizing young people to lead change both in North Carolina and globally. They envision helping to build a North Carolina that elevates the voices, work, and lives of LGBTQ youth.



Source: [ACLU.org](#)

WHAT ELSE CAN THE AFTERSCHOOL COMMUNITY DO?



Source: Temescal Associates

The answer to the question of how the afterschool community should respond to the current anti-LGBTQ+ youth actions is complex. First and foremost, afterschool programs should focus on creating a safe and supportive environment for all youth, including LGBTQ+ youth and ensuring that all of their participants feel seen and supported.

Afterschool programs can:

BUILD AWARENESS

- Stay informed by following news about LGBTQ issues in your state and around the country. Sign up for newsletters or alerts from organizations like The Trevor Project or the ACLU and follow their social media accounts to stay up-to-date on the latest developments.
- Educate others in your networks and community.

IMPROVE PROGRAM PRACTICE

- Hire knowledgeable and diverse staff, especially from the LGBTQ+ community.
- Ensure that staff *are* fully informed and know the risk factors for LGBTQ+ youth.
- Really listen to young people.
- Build positive relationships among adults and youth.
- Provide opportunities for all youth to express themselves.
- Promote positive peer interaction, respect and support.
- Provide opportunities for youth to make their voices heard in policy discussions.
- Provide opportunities for youth to form Genders & Sexualities Alliance (GSA) clubs.
- Know how and when to communicate and collaborate with the school and parents regarding the importance of supporting the safety and acceptance of all youth, including LGBTQ+ youth.
- Introduce efforts to prevent meanness and promote kindness.
- Provide professional development opportunities to build knowledge and skills of afterschool staff.

“It’s clear that lawmakers should be taking an intersectional approach to public policy, not working overtime to target the most marginalized young people, particularly those who are transgender or nonbinary, for partisan political points. We all must play a role in promoting LGBTQ acceptance and creating a more supportive world for all young people.” - [Josh Weaver, The Trevor Project](#)

OPPOSE ANTI-LGBTQ+ LEGISLATION AND ATTACKS

Afterschool programs and leaders are not equipped to end the political attacks on LGBTQ+ youth alone. However, in some cases, they and their allies can speak out in opposition.

Afterschool programs can advocate in support of LGBTQ+ youth.

- Speak out against anti-LGBTQ+ attacks.
- Find a state or local organization that’s working to fight back against anti-LGBTQ+ bills.
- Reach out to their legislators and share your views.
- Watch or follow hearings and state legislative sessions.

A CAUTION FOR AFTERSCHOOL NETWORKS AND PROVIDERS

It is important that each organization determine how best to respond to the anti-LGBTQ+ youth legislation and political rhetoric, in accordance to the local climate regarding LGBTQ+ issues.

A national afterschool leader we interviewed shared, “If leaders were to speak out in opposition to the legislators in power about actions, they may be adding fuel to the “culture wars”- whether it be at the local, state or national level. They may run the risk of losing funding for the children they serve and getting into a fight where we can’t win without hurting kids we care so much about. Instead, we can showcase by actions how to treat people and children with love- not hate - and not engaging on terms that will inflame tensions and hurt our ability to serve kids.”

THE ROLE OF FUNDERS

Many funders are not clear as to how they can get involved. A consultant and advisor to foundations we interviewed shared *“after many foundations jumped to creating statements against the George Floyd murder and other atrocities, board of directors started requesting policies regarding when it is appropriate for an organization to take a stand and when it’s not (e.g., should we make a statement for EVERYTHING?).”*

However, afterschool and youth development funders can respond to this wave of anti-LGBTQ legislation and attacks in several ways. In [A New Wave of Anti-LGBTQ Bills – What Can Funders Do?](#), author Andrew Wallace offers suggestions on how funders can respond. Below we present excerpts from this article.

“Foundations and corporations can respond to this wave of anti-LGBTQ legislation in a number of ways – and many are already doing so. Here are a few of the ways that funders are standing up for LGBTQ rights in the face of a new wave of backlash

1. *Make a public statement. As anti-LGBTQ+ bills have surfaced around the country, so has rhetoric that scapegoats LGBTQ people, especially transgender people. It can be powerful for a respected foundation to simply make a public statement that your foundation believes in full dignity and equality for LGBTQ people...”*



La June Montgomery

“The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) stands with businesses, organizations and individuals seeking to protect the human rights of the LGBT communities in North Carolina, as well as other states where similar laws are being considered. We are heartened by the broad coalition of public sector, non-profit, business and civic leaders who are speaking out against this injustice. WKKF is proud to join their ranks.” - [La June Montgomery, CEO of WKKF](#)

2. Advocate for partners to take a stand too. Foundations can have influence even when based outside of states where anti-LGBTQ laws are being considered. For example, The California Endowment sent letters to Georgia-based corporations where the Endowment held investments, asking them to take a stand against the state’s anti-LGBTQ legislation. In addition to that kind of shareholder advocacy, foundations and funder networks also hold conferences and events around the country. Many funders and networks are considering moving meetings to states that have more LGBTQ-affirming laws. Even if moving your event doesn’t make sense, you can use it as an opportunity to foster dialogue and raise awareness of the real harm caused by anti-LGBTQ laws.”



Source: Temescal Associates

We want to hear from you!

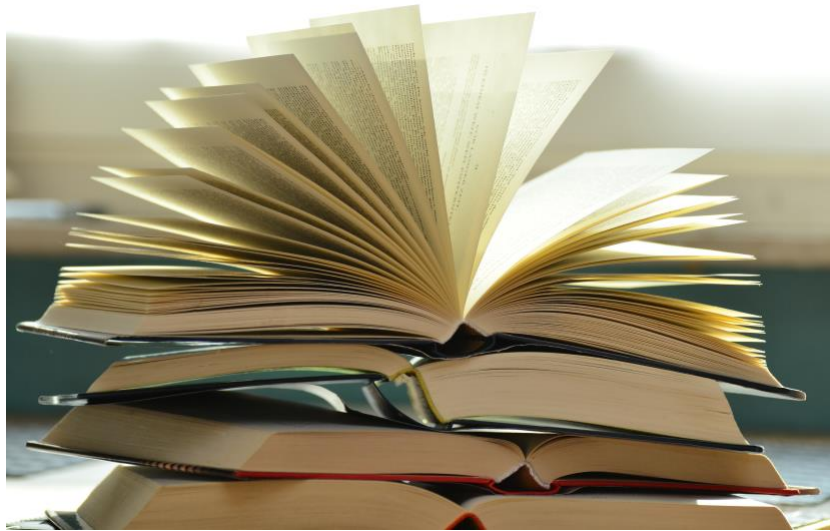
- What is happening in your state regarding LGBTQ+ issues?
- How is this affecting your LGBTQ+ youth and how is it impacting your program?
- What kinds of things are you doing to support LGBTQ+ youth in your program and staff?
- What kinds of things are you doing to oppose anti-LGBTQ+ attacks in your area?
- Would you add any additional resources that would be valuable to afterschool stakeholder?

Email us at info@temescalassociates.com.



Source: The Trevor Project

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Source: www.pexels.com

There are many resources/ links in the body of the paper. Below are some additional resources that may be useful:

- [VIDEO: Parents of trans kids fear Texas' anti-trans orders](#)
- [VIDEO: A look at efforts targeting LGBTQ youth around the country](#)
- [The GSA Network](#)
- [The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network \(GLSEN\)](#)
- [The 2021 National School Climate Survey Executive Summary- GLSEN](#)
- [Movement Advancement Project](#)
- [Under Fire Series: The War on LGBTQ People in America, Movement Advancement Project](#)
- [Under Fire Series: Erasing LGBTQ People From Schools and Public Life, Movement Advancement Project](#)
- [After School Programs for Gay & Lesbian Youth by Pridelines Youth Services](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Youth Resources, California Afterschool Network](#)
- [We Must Keep Widening the Circle of Inclusion, American Federation of Teachers](#)
- [For transgender kids, a frantic rush for treatment amid bans, AP](#)