



Queer Youth Assemble One Pager

Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students ([Title XII, Ch. 76, Sec. 5](#) Massachusetts Example):

- **The program was started in 1993 at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education following the establishment of the Commission (ordered by the Governor) that was designed for LGBTQIA+ youth students which informs policy and provides training, technical assistance, and professional development to school administrators and staff on topics related to gender identity, sexual orientation, and school climate**
- MA student anti-discrimination law requires that.. "all public school systems shall, through their curricula, encourage respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation."
 - **The Safe Schools Program helps schools ensure the gender identity, sex, and sexual orientation are being properly protected.**
 - In partnership with DESE, the Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students developed [Guidance for Massachusetts Public Schools Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity](#) which highlights key practices and policies to ensure that schools protect students who are transgender and non-binary.
- The goals of the Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students are to:
 - Increase the capacity of DESE and its units to better support LGBTQ students and inform policies impacting LGBTQ students;
 - Increase knowledge, develop empathy and build skills of school personnel, student leaders, Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs), and community members;
 - Support the social and emotional well-being of LGBTQ students;
 - Create and sustain safe and supportive school environments for LGBTQ students;
 - Support parents, guardians, families and community members;
 - Provide leadership development and networking opportunities for students; and
 - Reduce health disparities for LGBTQ students
- The range of services for the Safe Schools Program includes:
 - Hosting and organizing the Massachusetts Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) Student Leadership Council
 - Providing training, professional development, and technical assistance to school administrators, staff, and families
 - Influencing state and local policy affecting LGBTQ students
 - Building the capacity of ESE to support LGBTQ students
 - Leading LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum development, including DESE Model Curriculum Units including: Defending Democracy at Home: Advancing Constitutional Rights, Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) Same-Sex Marriage (Grades 11-12)
 - The program provides over 200 trainings and over 200 technical assistance responses, with requests nearly tripling in the 2022-2023 school year.
 - The GSA Student Leadership Council served nearly 1,000 students in middle and high school GSAs.

For further information contact Faith Cardillo: Head of Policy for Queer Youth Assemble

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