



SIX WAYS EDUCATORS CAN MAKE SCHOOLS SAFER FOR LGBTQ STUDENTS



The statistics are at once compelling and horrifying: Sixty percent of LGBTQ students say they feel unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation. While approximately eight percent of the youth population identifies as LGBTQ, they comprise 20 percent of those in the juvenile justice system. Of that 20 percent, 85 percent are youth of color. A [new infographic by the Schott Foundation for Public Education](#) makes these points and others, explaining why more philanthropic dollars are needed to support advocacy, youth-led organizing, and strategic communications related to LGBTQ youth.

In the meantime, what can educators do to increase the odds that LGBTQ youth are welcome and safe at school in an era in which the U.S. Department of Education has [scaled back](#) civil rights enforcement for LGBTQ students?

A [brief](#) jointly produced by the [Williams Institute](#) at the UCLA Law School and CU Boulder's [National Education Policy Center](#) offers the following suggestions of ways in which schools can become more welcoming and safe for LGBTQ students:

1. Adopt proactive school climate initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to inclusive policies and shared values within our pluralistic communities and society.
2. End discriminatory disciplinary practices and the inappropriate referral of LGBTQ students to special education.
3. Implement LGBTQ-specific programs or activities at individual school sites, which may include safe zones, gay-straight alliances, and suicide prevention programs.
4. Develop and implement LGBTQ-related professional development, locally determined and agreed upon by faculty and staff, for all school-site personnel. CU Boulder's [A](#)

Queer Endeavor offers an exemplar of an organizational partner that supports teachers and communities around topics of gender and sexual diversity in education.

5. Align classroom pedagogy with shared values and respect for differences.
6. Include age-appropriate LGBTQ-related content in the curriculum.

NEPC Resources on LGBTQ Issues

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