

This Month’s Topic: School Climate Findings for LGBTQ Students in California and Implications for Promoting a Safe School Environment

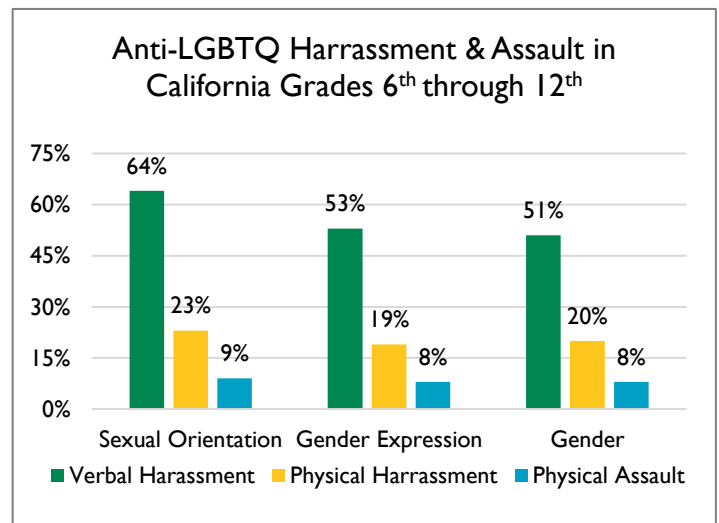
This literature review summarizes California specific findings and suggests implications on supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students stemming from the [2019 National School Climate findings](#) report published by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN). GLSEN is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. State-level data revealed that LGBTQ students in secondary schools (i.e., grades 6th through 12th) did not have access to important resources such as an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, experienced harassment or assault based on personal characteristics, and were not protected by supportive and inclusive school policies.

Availability of LGBTQ -Related Resources & Supports in California Secondary Schools

- Nineteen percent of LGBTQ students had a policy or official guidelines to support transgender and nonbinary students.
- Twenty-three percent of LGBTQ students attended a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy that included specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.
- 1 in 3 LGBTQ students were taught positive representations of LGBTQ people, history, or events (i.e., inclusive curriculum).

Anti-LGBTQ Harassment & Assault in California Secondary Schools

- More than half of LGBTQ students experienced verbal harassment (e.g., called names or threatened) based on their sexual orientation (64%), gender expression (53%), and gender (51%).
- Twenty-three percent of LGBTQ students experienced physical harassment (e.g., shoved or pushed) based on their sexual orientation, followed by 20% based on gender, and 19% based on gender expression.
- Nine percent of LGBTQ students experienced physical assault (e.g., punched, kicked, or injured with a weapon) based on their sexual orientation, followed by 8% based on gender expression and gender.
- Sixty-one percent never reported the incident to school staff. Thirty-seven percent of LGBTQ students who reported incidents indicated it resulted in effective staff intervention.



“I love learning but most days I just hate school. i can’t deal with the comments and the inability for people to just be kind to LGBTQIA+ students.”

“I sincerely hope that queer kids in future generations do not have to go through what I have been through and will most likely continue to suffer through.”

Effect of a Hostile School Climate Based on National Sample

LGBTQ students who experienced high levels of victimization and experienced discrimination at school:

- had lower GPAs compared to other students
- had higher levels of depression
- had lower levels of self-esteem
- were nearly three times as likely to have missed school in the past month due to feeling unsafe
- were less likely to feel sense of belonging to their school community
- were more likely to have been disciplined at school
- were less likely to plan to pursue any post-secondary education

Potential Implications for Crafton Hills College

- *Implement* supportive and inclusive school policies, such as *comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment and supportive transgender and nonbinary student policies*. These policies should explicitly state protections from victimization based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression alongside others such as race, religion, and disability. These policies should also include procedures on how to appropriately intervene when students break the policy and when LGBTQ students report incidents of harassment and assault.

Comprehensive school policies can provide students with greater protection against victimization as they make clear the various forms of bullying, harassment, and assault that will not be tolerated. They may also demonstrate that student safety, including the safety of LGBTQ students, is taken seriously by school administrators and that all students are a valuable and important part of the school community.

- *Continue to provide professional development for all members of the school community on LGBTQ student issues and practical ways to help*. This can increase the number of supportive faculty and staff available to students while supporting employee growth. Providing campus-wide professional development trainings on LGBTQ issues and bias based bullying and harassment can better equip the campus community with tools for effective intervention in cases of bullying of LGBTQ students.
- *Increase student access to LGBTQ-inclusive curricular resources*. Such as including positive representations of LGBTQ people, history, or events. Inclusion of LGBTQ-related information in the curriculum may enhance LGBTQ students' engagement and provide valuable information about the LGBTQ community.

These suggestions and actions can help potential and current Crafton students have the opportunity to learn and succeed in school, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Furthermore, these suggested actions align with Crafton's [strategic directions](#) 1, 2, 6, and 8 related to promoting student success, building campus community, promoting effective decision making, and supporting employee growth.

Methodology and Limitations

In 2019, GLSEN conducted the eleventh National School Climate Survey online, a biennial survey of the experiences of LGBTQ youth in U.S. secondary schools. Participants shared their experiences in school during the 2018-2019 academic school year related to:

- Hearing biased language from students and educators
- Experiences of harassment and assault
- Anti-LGBTQ discrimination
- Effects of hostile school climate on educational outcomes and psychological well-being
- The availability and utilization of supportive school resources

National Sample	California Sample
The national sample consisted of 16,713 LGBTQ students between the ages of 13 and 21 from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and Guam.	A total of 1480 respondents were attending schools in California.
The national sample was 69% White, 15% Latinx, 9% multiracial, 3% Asian American/Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian, 3% Black, 1% Arab American/Middle Eastern/North African, and <1% Native and Indigenous.	The California sample was 44% White, 32% Latinx, 10% multiracial, 9% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 2% Black, 2% Arab American/Middle Eastern/North African, and <1% Native and Indigenous.
The gender composition was 51% cisgender, 28% transgender, 15% nonbinary or genderqueer, and 5% questioning.	The gender composition was 54% cisgender, 26% transgender, 14% nonbinary or genderqueer, and 5% questioning.
For a more in-depth findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read full report • read executive summary • lee resumen ejecutivo • stream the webinar where findings are presented 	For more in-depth learning on the state-specific data read the 2019 California state snapshot .

Data provided only captures students in grades 6th through 12th, however these may be potential Crafton students. Educating the campus community on the unique challenges our LGBTQ students may have faced before attending Crafton can help us learn how to better support our students.

Additional research is needed to further assess whether these findings are also being observed in higher education, specifically at Crafton. In the meantime, Crafton Hills College can engage students, faculty, and staff in conversations about the particular challenges LGBTQ students may be facing in education and explore ways to help students through informed decision making that promotes student safety, inclusiveness, and success.

References:

- Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truong, N. L., & Zongrone, A. D. (2020). *The 2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. New York: GLSEN.
- GLSEN. (2021). *School Climate for LGBTQ Students in California (State Snapshot)*. New York: GLSEN.

For questions, please contact Diana Vaichis, Research Analyst, at dvaichis@craftonhills.edu.