Published on *Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network* (http://gsanetwork.org)

Bullied Student Expelled - A Tragically Typical Story

May. 8, 2012 ? Jill

[1]Our approach to school discipline isn't working if students get expelled for protecting themselves when the school won't.

That's exactly what happened to Dynasty Young, a gay student at Arsenal Tech High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. As the Indianapolis Star reported [2]:

> Young, who's openly gay, was suspended pending expulsion April 16 after he brought a stun gun to school, raised it in the air and fired it to scare away six kids who threatened to beat him up during a passing period. Grimes said she gave him the stun gun to protect himself from students who repeatedly called him names and threatened to beat him up. Some students threw rocks at him as he walked home from his after-school job one day. Grimes said she and her son complained to the school staff about bullying several times throughout the school year, but staff members told them that Young called attention to himself because he liked to accessorize his outfits with Grimes' jewelry and purses.

Expulsion and suspension cannot be the only tools we use to address violence and harassment -- and that includes bullying. According to the Dignity in Schools Campaign, LGBT students are 1.4 times more likely to be expelled than their straight peers. Low-income youth of color, in particular, are disproportionately harmed by these policies. Students who are expelled are more likely to get caught up in the juvenile justice system -- creating a pipeline for young

people from school to prison.

That's why GSA Network is working not just to end bullying, but to reform school discipline so that it addresses the root problem. As our Executive Director Carolyn Laub stated after Dynasty's expulsion:

?Dynasty, like many other lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender young people, was pushed out of school by an administration that failed to keep him safe and by school discipline policies that remove students instead of resolve the problem,? said Carolyn Laub, Executive Director of Gay-Straight Alliance Network. ?When schools use a ?zero tolerance? approach to school discipline, they unfortunately reinforce an environment of fear and punishment and fail to create a climate of inclusion, safety, and respect for all students.?

Source URL: http://gsanetwork.org/news/blog/bullied-student-expelled-tragically-typical-story/05/08/12

Links
[1] http://www.indystar.com/article/20120508/NEWS04/120508015/School-expels-bullied-teen-stun-gun?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|IndyStar.com
[2] http://www.indystar.com/article/20120508/NEWS04/120508015