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## National Safe Schools Day: Take Action in TN!

Oct. 5, 2011 ? Jill

It's bad enough when principals try to block a Gay-Straight Alliance from forming in their school, but one principal in Tennessee allegedly took his hostility towards LGBT youth further: he verbally and physically assaulted a student for supporting a GSA club.

[Tell the Monroe County School District and Sheriff's Department that they MUST act!](#)<sup>[1]</sup>

It's [National Safe Schools Day](#) <sup>[2]</sup> -- [take action to make it better in Tennessee!](#)<sup>[1]</sup>



Last Friday, Sequoyah High School student Chris Sigler was allegedly shoved and threatened by Principal Maurice Moser simply because he wore a handmade T-shirt that read "GSA: We've got your back." [According to the American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, Principal Moser then grabbed Chris's arm and chest-bumped him while asking "Who's the big man now?"

Despite the complaint filed by Chris and his mother, the Sheriff's Department has failed to interview his sister, who witnessed the alleged assault, or his mother, who witnessed additional behavior from the principal.

This incident is one in a series of disturbing actions taken by the Sequoyah High School administration in its attempts to block the formation of a Gay-Straight Alliance club. Under the Federal Equal Access Act, students have the right to form a Gay-Straight Alliance club in public

schools that allow other extra-curricular clubs, and research show that the presence of a GSA club is associated with greater feelings of safety among students. GSA clubs can be a lifeline for students dealing with bullying and harassment. The tragic deaths of many young people by suicide in the past year have illustrated the importance of safe spaces, resources, and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth.

**Demand that the Sheriff's Department fully investigate this incident, and further, that Monroe County Schools approve the GSA and address the hostile environment that LGBT students face at Sequoyah.**

[Sign the GSA Network and Tennessee Equality Project petition at Change.org](#) <sup>[1]</sup> and then let all principals know the importance of GSA clubs. [Write a letter](#) <sup>[4]</sup> to **your** principal or [film a letter to all p](#) <sup>[5]</sup>[rincipals](#) <sup>[5]</sup> in America, including Principal Moser, explaining how GSA clubs make it better!

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**Source URL:** <https://gsanetwork.org/news/blog/national-safe-schools-day-take-action-tn/10/05/11>

#### **Links**

[1] <http://www.change.org/petitions/investigate-harassment-of-lgbtq-youth-at-sequoyah-high-school-allow-a-gsa>

[2] <http://nationalsafeschoolsday.wordpress.com/2011/09/02/national-safe-schools-day/>

[3] <http://www.aclu.org/free-speech-lgbt-rights/tennessee-high-school-student-principal-assaulted-me-wearing-t-shirt>

[4] <http://www.makeitbetterproject.org/write-a-letter>

[5] <http://www.makeitbetterproject.org/film-letter>