

CONDUCTING A SCHOOL SURVEY

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Developing a School Survey

- Decide as a GSA how you want to write and conduct the survey. Divide up tasks and set deadlines. If your group is large enough, you may want to form a separate "survey committee."
- Pinpoint the specific issue(s) you would like to learn more about through the survey. For example, you might choose to focus on anti-gay slurs or teacher attitudes toward the GSA. Design several questions relating to each of these issues.
- Be sure to include demographic questions such as gender, race, and grade. This will help you organize your results later.

- Many GSAs have found that including one or two open-ended questions at the end of the survey can be a good way to generate useful and revealing information about people's attitudes. See the included survey questions and results for examples.
- Keep the survey fairly short -- it shouldn't take more than 5-10 minutes to fill out.

Getting Your Survey Approved

- Show your GSA advisor a draft of your survey and ask for feedback.
- Find out how other surveys at your school are approved and follow the same process. For example, some surveys get approved by Student Leadership. At some schools, it is wise to get the approval and/or endorsement of the principal so that if you run into any trouble with certain teachers giving out the survey you'll have the principal's support behind you. Some schools have simply approached a department chair (e.g. Social Studies or English) to help you distribute the survey through teachers in their department.
- When seeking approval, be able to articulate why you want to conduct a survey, what you hope to get out of it, and how it can benefit the larger school community.
- Develop a feasible plan for conducting the survey. Think about getting a good cross-section of the student population.
- If you don't get approval to conduct the survey in classrooms, consider handing it out at lunch time. Offer an incentive such as candy or cookies so lots of students will be interested in participating, not just those who support the GSA already.



So we gave out a survey - now what?

- Tally the results. Write up a report. Include the quantitative results for each question as well as the qualitative comments. You can also write a cover letter or introduction that gives background on why the survey was conducted and what major themes were discovered.
- Publish! Make a write up of why you did the survey, the results, quotes from respondents and submit it to your school newspaper or local city/town newspaper.
- Use survey stats to publicize your GSA meetings and raise visibility in your school through announcements, posters, and advertisements. Example: "72% of students surveyed at Alhambra said that things need to change to make LGBTQ students safer here. Now DO SOMETHING! Create change! Come to the next GSA meeting, Wednesday at 3:00 in room 100. And bring a friend."
- Identify some of the major issues with your school environment as indicated by the survey results (ie. teachers don't intervene when homophobic comments are made in the classroom) and design projects to address them
- Consider formulating the results so as to compare answers between grade levels and/or males and females.
- Think about giving out another survey at a later date to measure if your school climate is changing. Show your GSA advisor a draft of your survey and ask for feedback.



School Climate Survey

Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential

sexual orientation: describes whether a person is romantically and/or physically attracted to members of the same sex (gay or lesbian), to members of the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to members of both sexes (bisexual)

gender identity: a person's understanding, definition or experience of their own gender regardless of biological sex

transgender: a term for people who don't fit or identify with the gender roles assigned by society based on their biological sex

Grade: 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Gender (for example male, female, transgender): _____

Sexual Orientation (for example gay, straight, bisexual): _____

Race (for example black, asian, mixed): _____

1. Have you had education about lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) issues at school [presentations, speakers, classroom discussions]?

yes no don't know

2. Do you know of any vandalism or graffiti being directed against students at your school because people think they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)?

yes no don't know

3. Do you know of any physical attacks occurring against students at your school because people think they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)?

yes no don't know

4. During the past 12 months, how many times on school property were you harassed or bullied because you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender or someone thought you were?

4 or more times 2 to 3 times 1 time 0 times

5. How often do you hear anti-LGBT slurs directed at specific students, teachers, or staff?

several times a day once a day once a week once a month or less never

6. How often do you hear anti-LGBT slurs at school not specifically directed at an individual [example: "that's so gay" to mean something is bad]?

several times a day once a day once a week once a month or less never

If you hear anti-LGBT slurs of any kind,

7. teachers or staff step in: always often sometimes never

8. you or other students step in: always often sometimes never

9. Do you know of students who openly identify as LGBT? yes no don't know

10. Do you know of teachers or staff who openly identify as LGBT? yes no don't know

11. If you wanted information and/or support about sexual orientation or gender identity, would you know where at school to go?

yes no don't know

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

12. At school, it's ok for girls to be masculine. (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

13. At school, it's ok for boys to be feminine.

1 2 3 4 5

14. I feel my school is a safe place for LGBT students, teachers, and staff.

1 2 3 4 5

15. I feel safe at my school.

1 2 3 4 5

16. Is there anything your school could do to make it safer for LGBT students, teachers, and staff? Any other thoughts on these issues? _____
