Building and Safeguarding Your School’s LGBTQ+ Collection

The percentage of students with access to inclusive library resources continues to grow each year. Still, less than half of LGBTQ high school students report having access to LGBTQ-related library materials at school. (GSLN: Tools for Libraries 2017)

CREATE a KWL chart to explore your learning and inquiries as you begin to think about LGBTQ+ materials and intellectual freedom.

INQUIRE Students in my school are requesting specific materials or types of materials I’m uncomfortable collecting. (p. 13)

ENGAGE A parent has challenged the inclusion of certain materials in my collection. (p. 39)

EXPLORE How do I create a policy for challenges to my materials? (p. 54)

COLLABORATE I’m worried about the climate at my school. How can I help make it more welcoming? (p. 21)

CURATE How do I justify collecting LGBTQ+ materials in conservative areas where this hasn’t been done? (p. 26)

INCLUDE My school has just enrolled its first openly transgender student. (p. 17)

READ “How to become an LGBTQ ally” from AASL’s Knowledge Quest website (2011)

CREATE a list of allies in your school and community and share that list with other educators.

ASK “Is my library a welcoming space for all students?”

When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. (Shroyer 1993)

LGBTQ+ students in schools with an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum were less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation. (GSLN: 2018 Climate Survey)

40.4% vs. 62.6%

19% of school libraries DO NOT have a challenge policy.

READ
- Be Prepared with a Challenged Materials Policy from PLA
- ALA’s Sample Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources
- ALA’s Challenge Support

In 2013, LGBTQ+ materials accounted for an average of only 0.4% of school library collections, despite research that suggests that as many as 3-29% of students may identify as LGBTQ+. (Hughes-Hand 2013, S. Horton 2015)”

Providing equitable access to information means our LGBTQ students should see themselves reflected in the library collection, and that all students who visit the library see an accurate representation of the diversity in the world. (Shroyer 2015)


American Association of School Librarians
TRANSFORMING LEARNING

COMMUNITY

A hostile school climate affects students’ academic success and mental health. LGBTQ+ students who experience victimization and discrimination at school have worse educational outcomes and poorer psychological well-being. (GSLN 2018 Climate Survey)

ASSESS your school climate with Teaching Tolerance’s School Climate Questionnaire.

START a gay-straight alliance (GSA) at your school. GSA Network and GLSEN can help!

COLLABORATE with administration to identify inclusive PD activities.