

Resolution: To support the inclusion, protection, and affirmation of LGBTQ students and families in Michigan.

Whereas, Michigan PTA mobilizes the forces of school, home, and community in order to ensure quality education and nurturing environment for every child; and

Whereas, National PTA has adopted [Resolution](#) and [Guidance](#) on recognition of LGBTQ Individuals as a Protected Class (2017); and

Whereas, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students who are bullied and harassed are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, feel excluded from the school community, and experience lower academic achievement and increased school drop out¹; and

Whereas, parent acceptance, affirmation, and support of their LGBTQ children and adolescents are identified in the research as being associated with the improvement of mental health of their children while mitigating against the impacts of the harmful treatment aimed at LGBTQ youth²; and

Whereas, the National PTA³, the American Academy of Pediatrics⁴, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention⁵, the National School Boards Association⁶, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers⁷, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention⁸, the American Psychological Association and National Association of School Psychologists⁹, and other expert professional associations have published resolutions, codes of ethics, or guidance in support of inclusive and affirming school policies; and

¹ Kosciw, J.G., Greytak, E.A., Zongrone, A.D., Clark, C.M., & Truong, N.L. (2018). The 2017 national school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools. New York, GLSEN. Retrieved from <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN-2017-National-School-Climate-Survey-NSCS-Full-Report.pdf>

² Ryan, C., Russell, S. T., Huebner, D., Diaz, R., & Sanchez, J. (2010). Family acceptance in adolescence and the health of LGBT young adults: Family acceptance in adolescence and the health of LGBT young adults. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 23(4), 205–213. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6171.2010.00246.x

³ National PTA. (2016). Resolution on the recognition of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer questioning LGBTQ individuals as a protected class. Retrieved from <https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/ptas-positions/Individual-PTA-Resolutions/Resolution-on-the-Recognition-of-Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-and-Queer-Questioning-LGBTQ-Individuals-as-a-Protected-Class>

⁴ American Academy of Pediatrics (2019). Adolescent sexual health: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. Retrieved from <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/adolescent-sexual-health/Pages/LGBTQ-Youth.aspx>

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2017). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender health. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>

⁶ National School Boards Association (2017). 2016 transgender students in schools: Frequently asked questions for public school boards and staff. Retrieved from https://cdn-files.nsba.org/s3fs-public/reports/Transgender_Guide_101217_V11.pdf?qkRqeN_Ck0KzisOpzKQ62VT98vfhzgkv

⁷ National Education Association (n.d.) Safe schools for everyone: Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/tools/30420.html>

⁸ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. (2016). Suicide & LGBT populations. Retrieved from <http://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/talking-about-suicide-and-lgbt-populations-2nd-edition.pdf>

⁹ American Psychological Association & National Association of School Psychologists (2015). Resolution on gender and sexual orientation diversity in children and adolescents in schools. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/orientation-diversity.aspx> and http://gender_sexual_orientation_diversity.pdf

Whereas, National and Michigan PTA support current federal civil rights legislation¹⁰, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission has issued an interpretive statement on sex discrimination in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include gender identity and sexual orientation¹¹, and the [Michigan State Board of Education Statement and Guidance on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning \(LGBTQ\) Students](#)¹², which provides equitable practices and policies to support LGBTQ students in schools; and

Whereas, Michigan parents of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other non-heterosexual and non-cisgender (LGBTQIA+) students deserve the same level of high-quality education for their children as all parents, without fear of discrimination or isolation of their child or their siblings, thus disrupting their child’s innate ability to achieve academically and enjoy the full school community that all families should, regardless of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, familial status, or marital status in education; therefore be it

Resolved, that Michigan PTA actively supports: 1) dissemination of parent acceptance resources to all parents as anticipatory support and reduction of community stigma; 2) training of regional PTAs on the Michigan State Board of Education Statement and Guidance on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for LGBTQ Students; 3) participation in reviews of current school district policies regarding harassment, bullying, dress codes, facility use, school record update access, and privacy, and support revisions and amendments to those policies that specifically address the topics of sexual orientation and gender identification and gender expression as they relate to harassment and bullying; 4) the formation of extracurricular student-led clubs, such as gay-straight alliances or gender and sexuality alliances (GSA) in middle and high schools in accordance with the federal Equal Access Act; and 5) designation of a Michigan PTA representative who is conversant in topics related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; and be it further

Resolved, that Michigan PTA and its constituent associations seek and support legislation that creates a safe, supportive, and accepting environment in schools, specifically with training for parents and school-related professionals to support the needs of LGBTQ students.

¹⁰ The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub.L. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241, enacted July 2, 1964)

¹¹ Michigan Civil Rights Commission (MCRC) (2018-I). Interpretive statement regarding the meaning of “sex” in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (Act 453 of 1976). Retrieved from https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdcr/MCRC_Interpretive_Statement_on_Sex_05212018_625067_7.pdf

¹² Michigan State Board of Education (2016). Statement and guidance on safe and supportive learning environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students. Retrieved from https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SBEStatementonLGBTQYouth_534576_7.pdf

Rationale

Approximately one in 10 of high school students in Michigan are LGBT. Specifically, according to the 2017 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 8.9% of students in grades nine through twelve identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) and 1.3% of students identify as transgender¹³.

Michigan students who are LGBT report experiencing harms at school that are disproportionate compared to their non-LGBT peers. Student data from the 2017 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey¹⁴ show that, of LGB youth: nearly 54 percent seriously contemplated suicide in the last year, nearly 45 percent made a plan to attempt suicide; nearly 24 percent attempted suicide in the last 12 months; 30 percent reported being bullied on school property; 30 percent reported they were bullied electronically; nearly 68 percent felt sad or hopeless for two weeks or more in the last year prior to the survey; and 16.5 percent did not go to school because they felt unsafe on the way to school or at school.

Despite these staggering statistics, fewer than 1 in 10 (8%) Michigan students report attending a school with a bullying/harassment policy that protects them from harassment or bullying based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Non-discrimination and other protective policies at the state and local levels, which help protect LGBTQIA+ student and family safety, are essential to improve the mental and physical well being of all students.

Inclusion and affirmation of LGBTQIA+ students and families has been shown to improve school climate for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity¹⁵. Safe and supportive environments for LGBTQIA+ youth benefit all youth by signaling the inherent worth and dignity of all people. Affirmation and inclusivity of all their identities demonstrate to others, including other marginalized groups—a commitment that aligns with PTA’s mission, values, and purpose—a culture and climate where all students and families are welcomed and protected.

¹³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018). Michigan 2017 youth risk behavior survey. Retrieved from <https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline>

¹⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2018). Michigan 2017 youth risk behavior survey. Retrieved from <https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline>

¹⁵ GLSEN (2019). School climate in Michigan (state snapshot). Retrieved from https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Michigan%20State%20Snapshot%20-%202017%20NSCS_0.pdf