

YRBS Gender and Sexuality Questions: Making Every Student Count

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All Students Count Coalition

Membership

Coalition includes:

- Advocates for Youth
- Center for American Progress
- GLSEN
- Human Rights Campaign
- The Trevor Project
- and other advocacy organizations

Vision

We believe by collecting data of young people's sexuality and gender, states and municipalities along with their community partners will be better able to meet the needs of LGBTQ youth in promoting health and academic success.

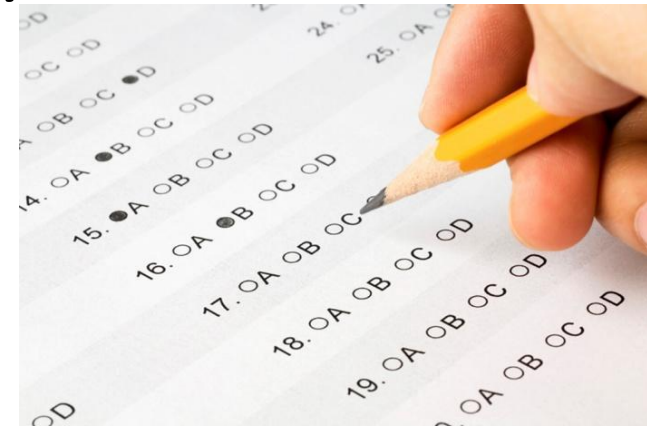
Two Approved Questions on Sexual Orientation –Core Questionnaire

During your life, with whom have you had sexual contact?

- I have never had sexual contact
- Males
- Females
- Females and Males

Which of the following best describes you?

- Heterosexual (Straight)
- Gay or Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Not Sure



Optional Question on Gender Expression

A person's appearance, style, dress, or the way they walk or talk may affect how people describe them. How do you think other people at school would describe you?

- * Very feminine
- * Mostly feminine
- * Somewhat feminine
- * Equally feminine and masculine
- * Somewhat masculine
- * Mostly masculine
- * Very masculine

Question?

How does your state or district make the decision about sexual orientation *and* gender expression questions on the YRBS survey?

- What factors are taken into account?
- Priorities?
- Politics?

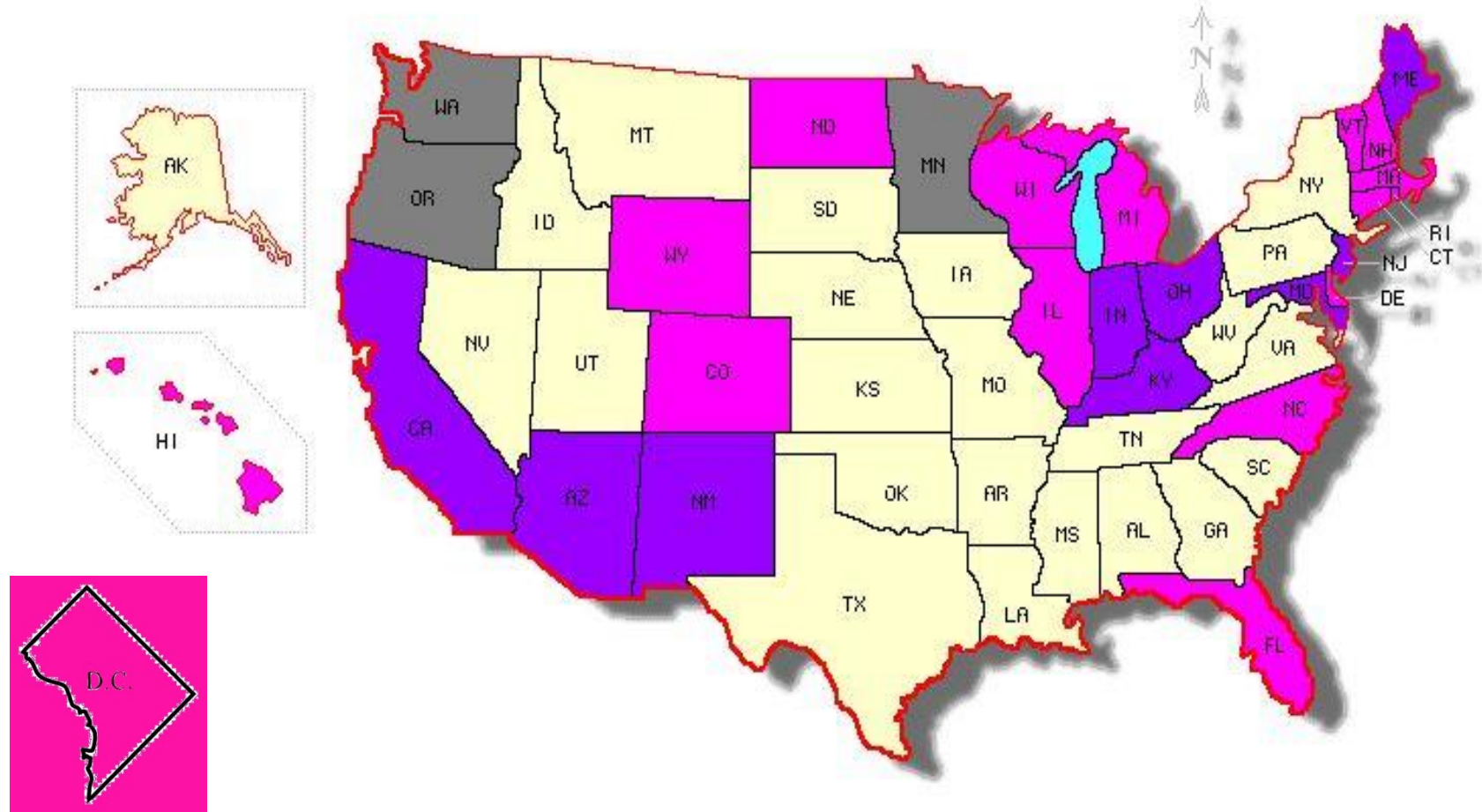
Question?

State/district representatives:

What is your role in making these decisions? How can you impact what questions are included?

2013 YRBS Sexual Orientation Questions by States with Weighted Data

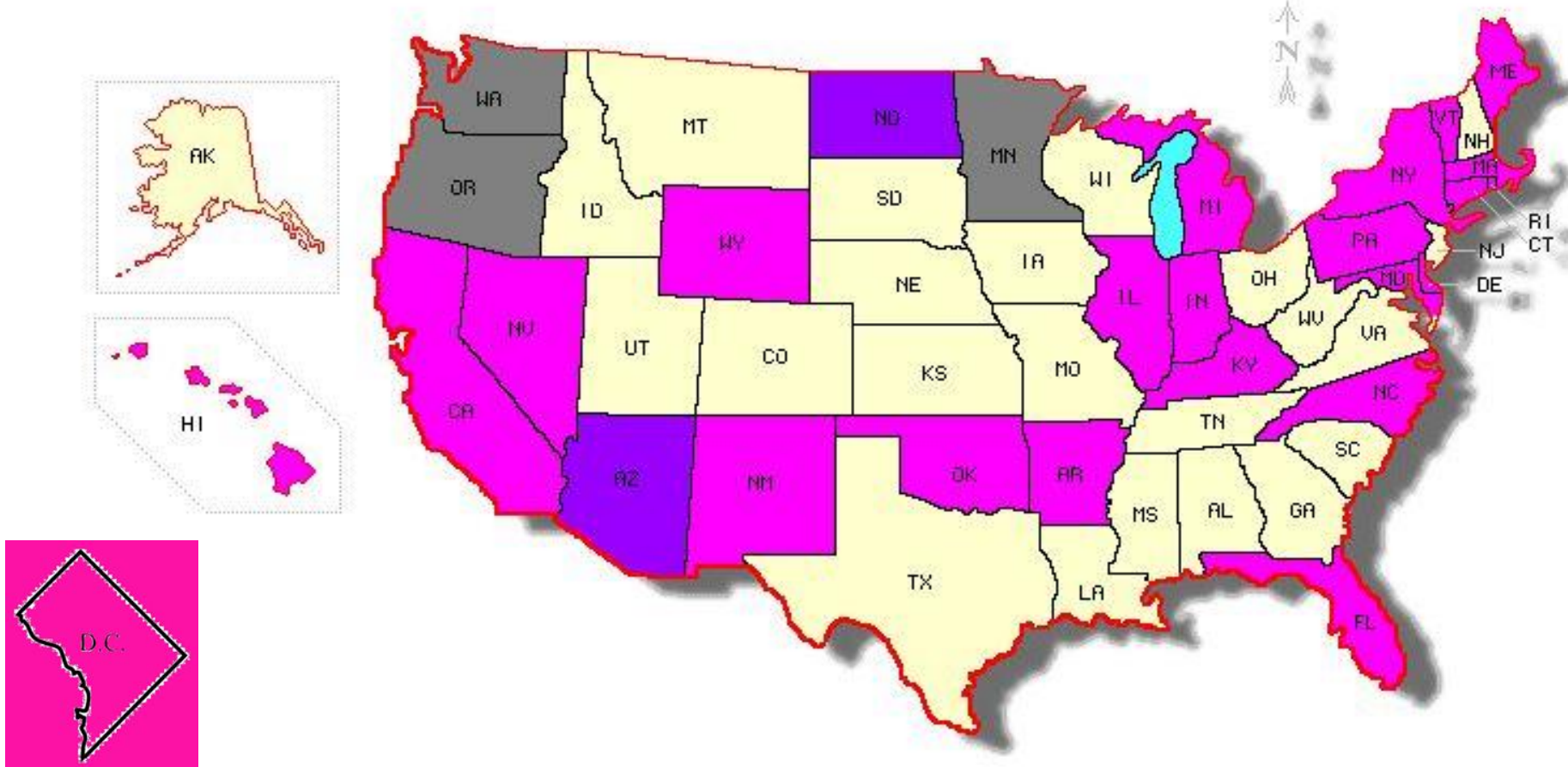
- - Both Questions
- - One Question
- - No Questions
- - N/A



+ 11 School Districts

2015 YRBS Sexual Orientation Questions by States with Weighted Data

- - Both Questions
- - One Question
- - No Questions
- - N/A



+ 19 School Districts

Overview of 2013 & 2015 Data

- Sites that asked the Gender Expression question in 2013 & 2015:
 - * Los Angeles Unified School District (CA)
 - * San Diego Unified School District (CA)
 - * Chicago Public Schools (IL)
 - * Broward County Public Schools(FL)
- About 14% of males and females were highly gender non-conforming (2013)



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CURRENT EFFORTS TO SUPPORT YRBS

Public Comment Action

- Federal Register Docket No. CDC-2016-0022
 - CDC is requesting a 3-year approval to reinstate with change the data collection for the National YRBS.
- Supported the continued administration of the YRBS
- Asked CDC to:
 - support broad use and continued analysis of gender expression question
 - commit to further research, develop and implement a question that specifically asks about gender identity

Additional Activities

- Applying for private funding:
 - Support advocacy/ education for asking the SO and GE questions
 - Support gender expression data analysis and recommendations for continued use

Additional Activities

- Developing an advocacy plan
 - Identifying community organizations to support state and municipalities
 - Identifying other national organizations and coalitions who want to support YRBS
 - Materials development
- Consistent communication with CDC

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Gearing Up for 2017

Strategies for Increasing the Number
of States/Municipalities
that ask Sexual Orientation and Gender
Expression Questions



Who can assist you?

External

- LGBT organizations
- Mental health, sexual health, reproductive justice organizations
- Suicide prevention organizations
- Departments of Health
- National Organizations
- Other grant funded programs
- Students/ GSAs
- Parents

Internal

- Other grant funded programs
- Departments focused on:
 - health of students
 - safety
 - mental/ behavioral health
 - student engagement

Advocacy Strategies

- Social media campaigns
- Petitions
- Email/call day
- Contact elected officials
 - Education or Health committee chairperson



Education Strategies

- Work with your partners who can do advocacy
 - Provide them with data
 - Stories
 - Join LGBTQ coalitions as an educator
- Presentations to:
 - Boards of education
 - Parents
 - Community partners
- Fact Sheets
- Support GSA development

Materials for Support

- ASCC (found on amplifyyourvoice.org)
 - PowerPoints
 - One-pagers
- CDC
 - Interactive Table
 - Fact Sheets
 - FAQs



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Including Sexual Orientation Questions on the YRBS Can Help Educators Improve Academic Success among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Questioning Youth

Studies show that school environment, health risk behavior and academic risk are linked for lesbian, gay, bisexual and questioning (LGBQ) youth. Decades of research indicate that LGBQ youth often suffer from disparate rates of substance abuse, depression, suicidal ideation and behavior, bullying and harassment, abuse, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and teenage pregnancy. These increased risks are often the result of, and a complicated reaction to, negative environmental stressors LGBQ youth face in their schools, homes and communities. Recent research also shows that youth suffering from such health risks are at greater academic risk than are other youth.^{1,2,3,4}

Nationally, 30% of LGBQ students report missing a day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable in school⁵ (compared to only 6.7%, respectively, of a national sample of secondary school students⁶). These absences can cause LGBQ youth to fall behind in their class work and feel disconnected from school. Bullying-related absences also have economic consequences for schools. For example, a report issued by the California Safe Schools Coalition, *The Economic Costs of Bullying in Schools*, shows that each year in the state, there are nearly 109,000 school absences due to harassment based on actual or perceived sexual orientation. Based on the state's school expenditures, the cumulative cost to school districts in the State of California of these absences is an estimated **\$39.9 million each year.**⁷

School districts and states that include questions about sexual orientation on the YRBS are better situated to understand the depth and breadth of the problem and to create programs and policies that help to break the cycle and improve academic success for LGBQ youth.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have approved two optional questions to assess identity and behavioral components of sexual orientation for inclusion in state and/or local school districts' Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS) and has embraced efforts to encourage more states and school districts to include these questions.

What are the CDC approved questions?

The questions approved by the CDC to be administered as optional YRBS questions have been created to capture sex of sexual contacts and sexual identity are as follows:

- ❖ *During your life, with whom have you had sexual contact?*
____ I have never had sexual contact; ____ Females; ____ Males; ____ Females and Males
- ❖ *Which of the following best describes you?*
____ Heterosexual (straight); ____ Gay or Lesbian; ____ Bisexual; ____ Not sure

Activity



One talking point for the inclusion (or maintaining) of one or both of the sexual orientation questions to your 2017 YRBS

One talking point for the inclusion of the gender expression question to your 2017 YRBS



The coalition wants to help

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO SUPPORT YOUR YRBS EFFORTS?

A decorative graphic in the top right corner consisting of a dark red triangle pointing downwards and to the right, with a pattern of colorful dots (red, orange, yellow, green, blue) scattered around it.

REMEMBER.....

YOU CAN



DO IT!

And We're Here to Help!

Mary Beth Szydowski
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Amy Loudermilk
The Trevor Project



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