



Since 1988, the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC) has built community and inspired positive social change through education enhancement, career trainings, health promotion, and leadership development with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) youth, their families, and allies of all races, classes, genders, and abilities.

Established in 2011, LYRIC's **School-Based Initiative** is a model of bringing LYRIC's 25 years of expertise with LGBTQQ youth directly into SFUSD school communities. LYRIC is educating and building allyship amongst students, school staff, and families to create learning environments where LGBTQQ youth can be successful and truly thrive.

Currently in Everett Middle School and Balboa High School (School Year 2012-2013). Previously in Buena Vista Horace Mann (2011-2012) and Mission High School (2012). Continuing in Everett, Balboa, Horace Mann with potential in Aptos Middle School, Denman Middle School, and Presidio Middle School (2013-2014). Further San Francisco expansion in 2014 and beyond.

BACKGROUND STATISTICS

- Over 3,000 SFUSD LGBTQ students, including over 300 transgender students.
- 63% of middle school students report hearing anti-gay remarks which 59% never hear school staff intervene
- 33% of LGB students and 47% of transgender students report skipping school because of a lack of safety (as opposed to 11% of heterosexual students)
- \$39,917 = approximate loss of funds per day to SFUSD based on student truancy
- 22% of LGB students receive mostly F's while the same is true for 1% of heterosexual students
- In 1989, queer youth across the US were 2-3 times more likely to attempt suicide than their straight peers. In 2011, the number for LGB students in San Francisco jumped to 5.6 times more likely. Additionally, 1 out of 2 transgender students have attempted suicide. **These statistics represent over 1,000 LGBT SFUSD students reporting suicide attempts.**

**Sources: SFUSD, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and California Healthy Kids Survey*

GOALS

- 1) Create immediate, practical solutions to eliminate the emotional, psychological and physical harms caused by pervasive and under-addressed LGBTQQ hate speech, threats and violence in the school community.
- 2) Build the long-term, strategic capacity of the school community to promote the inclusion and wellbeing of LGBTQQ youth by cultivating leadership among students, teachers and families.

COMPONENTS

LYRIC's School-Based Initiative is built on empowering...

- 1) **STUDENTS:** a year-long **gender/sexuality-emphasized social justice course** with a culminating project where students proactively bring the rest of their classmates into a safer, more loving community;
- 2) **SCHOOL STAFF:** a **professional development training track** for teachers, administrators, and all other school staff on LGBTQQ/gender inclusion strategies and alternatives to punitive, zero-tolerance anti-bullying approaches plus one-on-one technical assistance for any school staff member looking for more in-depth support; and
- 3) **FAMILIES:** **discussion circles and support groups** for families to talk with their school-age children about the gender and sexuality issues arising at home.

EVALUATION

LYRIC conducted extensive pre- and post-surveys with students and school staff participating in the School-Based Initiative during the 2011-2012 School Year. Education, Training, and Research (ETR) Associates, a third-party evaluation firm, completed an evaluation brief, *LYRIC's School-Based Initiative - Creating Schools Where LGBTQQ Students Can Thrive*, showing "promising evidence of positive outcome," LYRIC's work is particularly successful in achieving increases in the the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) Total School Assets Scale, including nine survey items across three domains—caring relationships with adults at school, high expectations from adults at school, and meaningful opportunities to participate in the school community.

TESTIMONY

[LYRIC is] planting a seed that will eventually grow into very big, beautiful flower that will spread knowledge and keep schools safer places for all students.
Rexy, SFUSD Student

[LYRIC] gives us ownership and says, "You take it on." We have to develop it in our own way. It's not a canned curriculum. You actually have to think.
Gail, SFUSD Teacher

Our job is to make sure kids feel safe and open and become leaders in their schools so that future generations can have that same benefit.
Mark Sanchez, SFUSD Principal

Many times families don't have a safe space to talk about [gender and sexuality], but if schools can create that space, it allows parents to better understand their children and create stronger bonds.
Anabel, SFUSD Family Liaison



PRESS CONTACT:
Jodi L. Schwartz
LYRIC Executive Director
415.793.3220
jodi@lyric.org