



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 565

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to make use of available free resources from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in its implementation of the Respect for All initiative in order to protect and support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students.

By Council Members Dromm, Gentile, Gibson, Johnson, Koslowitz, Rose, Rosenthal, Mendez, Rodriguez and Menchaca

Whereas, According to Chancellor's Regulation A-832, it is the policy of the New York City Department of Education (DOE) to maintain a safe and supportive learning and educational environment that is free from harassment, intimidation and/or bullying committed by students against other students on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability or weight; and

Whereas, The DOE's Respect for All (RFA) initiative works to protect all students, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students from bullying and harassment through confidential reporting of incidents, prompt investigation, appropriate intervention and educating students, parents and staff about the policy through posters hung in schools and brochures distributed annually; and

Whereas, Research shows that LGBT students are particularly vulnerable to bullying and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression; and

Whereas, According to the 2011 National School Climate Survey conducted by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), responses show that in New York 81% of LGBT students were verbally harassed due to sexual orientation and 60% due to gender expression, 29% were physically harassed due to sexual orientation and 23% due to gender expression, and 13% were physically assaulted due to sexual orientation and 9% due to their gender expression; and

Whereas, Students in New York also reported high levels of other forms of harassment at school: 91% felt deliberately excluded or “left out” by peers; 86% had mean rumors or lies told about them; 64% were sexually harassed; 57% experienced electronic harassment or “cyberbullying”; and 46% had property (e.g., car, clothing, or books) deliberately damaged and/or stolen; and

Whereas, GLSEN’s research further reports that 59% of New York students who had been harassed or assaulted in school never reported it to a staff person, and only 39% of the students who did report the incident said school staff intervened effectively; and

Whereas, This research also found that LGBT students with a greater number of supportive staff members had higher grade point averages than those with fewer supportive staff members; and

Whereas, Despite publication of the anti-bullying policy, LGBT students are often unaware that they are protected by anti-bullying and harassment policies and that supportive staff members exist in their schools; and

Whereas, GLSEN, a nonprofit organization that strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, has made available free Safe Space Kits through its website; and

Whereas, GLSEN’s Safe Space Kit is designed to help educators create a safe space for LGBT students and is one of the most effective ways for an educator to create a safe learning environment in school for all students and to be a supportive ally to LGBT students; and

Whereas, GLSEN’s website also offers access to other free tools, such as educator guides, LGBT-inclusive curriculum, and lesson plans on bullying, bias and diversity to facilitate classroom discussions; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to make use of available free resources from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in its implementation of the Respect for All initiative in order to protect and support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students.

JA
Res 408/2010
LS 887/2014
3/18/14