

The Pikes Peak Safe @ School Coalition:

Pikes Peak Safe @ School Meetings – Convened at Inside Out Youth Services:

3rd Tuesdays of the Month

5:30 pm to 6:30 pm

235 S. Nevada Avenue

Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Inside Out Youth Services – Northeast corner of Nevada Avenue & Vermijo Street, located in the lower level of the Colorado Springs Independent.

The coalition involves school staff, parents, students and community organizations in an effort to make schools safer for all students, regardless of sexual orientation, transgender status or gender identity/gender expression. The coalition provides consultation and training, as well as general information and support about effective bias-based bullying intervention strategies.

Community partners include Inside Out Youth Services, Citizens Project, Girls Scouts of Colorado, Colorado Springs School District 11, ONE-Colorado and Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountain Region.

Contact: Shawna@insideoutys.org / Eric@insideoutys.org / 719.328.1056

www.insideoutys.org

For every 1 LGBT student bullied because of their actual sexual orientation or gender identity, there are 4 “straight” students harassed because of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. The Pikes Peak Safe @ School Coalition collaborates in a statewide effort supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and all students who are targets of this type of bias-based harassment and discrimination.

Harassment, exclusion and violence no longer have to be rites of passage for young people at school. The Pikes Peak Safe @ School Coalition connects community members in action to create safer, respectful, more welcoming schools.

We can assist your school with:

- Creating and implementing policy that aligns with HB1254 anti-bullying law;
- Trainings that support teachers and counselors with information and effective intervention strategies regarding bias-based bullying;
- Creating a more welcoming, positive climate so that every student has the best chance to learn and grow in their unique positive identity.

**Colorado House Bill 1254, requires that all school districts expand the definition of bullying to include – based on perceived traits or characteristics of the student – harassment because of age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, *gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, socio-economic status and familial status.*

***See HB1254 FAQ, www.insideoutys.org ***

Things to Consider: School Administrators, Teachers and Staff

Colorado's HB1254 protects all students – including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender – from bullying. But more than a year since the law's passage, fewer than half of school districts in our state include sexual orientation in their anti-bullying policy. Even fewer have enumerated protections to effectively address harassment based on gender identity/gender expression.

Nationally, one in three LGBT students who report incidents of harassment because of their sexual orientation or gender identity state that school staff did not respond at all to the reported incident. (GLSEN, 2011) Additionally, a student's actual sexual orientation may be far less relevant to his or her social victimization than his or her gender identity or gender expression.

That's why the Pikes Peak Safe @ School Coalition encourages and will assist your school with four important steps to creating a safe school climate.

1. Policy Reform. Studies have shown that students feel safer and do better in school when there are non-discrimination policies that are inclusive of sexual orientation, and gender identity/gender expression. Generic or non-enumerated "anti-bullying" policies are ineffective in establishing climates that are free of bias-motivated harassment.
2. Engaged Teachers and Staff. Students do better when teachers and other school employees intervene in and set the tone school-wide that all forms of bullying are unacceptable. The Pikes Peak Safe @ School Coalition provides consultation and trainings for school teachers, counselors, bus drivers, principals and others so they have the knowledge and skills to intervene in LGBT-bias based harassment.
3. Student-Led Organizations. Studies show that the mere presence of a student-led peer organization such as a Gay-Straight Alliance or Gay Straight Transgender Alliance fosters safer school climates. Inside Out Youth Services supports local student GSAs and GSTAs with sessions designed to help students help one another, and we collaborate with the Colorado GSA-Network during statewide trainings.
4. Curricular Inclusion. Inclusion of LGBT issues in school curricula was the "single strongest factor" in studies analyzing what produces better school climates for LGBT students. (National Education Assoc., 2009, "Stepping Out of the Closet, Into the Light") In other words, when students hear and learn about LGBT people in a positive structured setting, it makes those students feel safer.

For more information on ways to support your students, please contact Eric@insideoutys.org or Shawna@insideoutys.org, or phone Inside Out Youth Services at 719-328-1056.

www.insideoutys.org