



LGBTQ-Inclusive Lessons and Resources

by Garden State Equality and Make it Better for Youth

LGBTQ Inclusive education is more than celebrating one day, one person, or one event. For far more than a decade, national and state level professional educational organizations, equality focused advocacy groups, and educational leaders have called for more LGBTQ inclusion in public education. From teacher training (pre-service) to professional development, the impact of educators on the outcomes of their students has been a topic of study and increasing focus. With regards to gender, race and ethnicity, we know that seeing oneself positively contributes to greater likelihood of positive outcomes.

While there is increased cultural presence, and markedly greater cultural competency around gender identity and sexual orientation, the outcomes for youth in our public schools remain grim: according to (GLSEN data) students in middle and high schools across the nation disproportionately experience greater instances of harassment, bullying, assault, and other marginalizations in daily life and education which results in outcomes like more frequent absences from school and limitations in access to educational opportunities.

We must tie positive representation to positive outcomes. Should all students (and educational professionals and educational community stakeholders) begin to see positive representations of LGBTQ individuals in their studies; should they see contributions, should they understand impacts, should they acquire new lenses for looking at what parts of our culture are visible and for what reasons, as educators we provide context for our collective knowledge and understanding – as well as demonstrating education as alive and always evolving with new information.

With that in mind, the legislation which brought LGBTQ Inclusion to the forefront in New Jersey also brought forth a requirement to address the accurate representation of the histories and contributions of persons with disabilities. We do, herein, provide a couple of lessons which focus on this aspect of inclusion as an means to model our framework as a tool for inclusive approaches beyond the LGBTQ spectrum.

We are called to this work as a large group of committed educators and advocates; we are grateful for the broad foundation built by dozens of people who dedicated years of their lives in the legislature, education, policy, advocacy, and research. It is from this resolve to social justice that the text of the bill and eventual legislation was enacted. These lessons, created by educators deeply and inextricably connected to educational outcomes, are a first step in contributing to the living nature of education.

We hope that you are inspired and grow your practice in your classroom, with your teaching peers, with your PLCs, in leadership, and in perpetuity.

Dr. Lori Burns, Lead, Pilot Study and Educators for Equality
Ashley Chiappano, Safe Schools and Community Engagement Manager, Garden State Equality
Kate Okeson, Program Director, Make it Better for Youth

To access the online LGBTQ educational resources, click [HERE](#)