Every Child in Focus
Leadership Series:
Embracing Family Diversity
Welcoming LGBTQ Parents to PTA
GoToWebinar
Tools to Help You Participate
Meet Our Speakers

Laura Bay
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The Human Rights Campaign

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Rainbow Families DC
National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

- Welcoming All Families (Standard 1)
- Communicating Effectively (Standard 2)
- Supporting Student Success (Standard 3)
- Speaking Up for Every Child (Standard 4)
- Sharing Power (Standard 5)
- Collaborating with Community (Standard 6)
National PTA Resolution on LGBTQ Individuals as a Protected Class
Guidance and Talking Points for PTA Leaders

This document provides information about National PTA’s resolution on the **Recognition of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Individuals as a Protected Class**, which was adopted by the voting delegates at the 2016 Annual National PTA Convention & Expo. PTA leaders are encouraged to use this document to inform and guide responses to membership, partner organizations and stakeholders concerning the resolution. If you have any questions regarding the resolution, please contact Elizabeth Rorick, deputy executive director of communications and government affairs for National PTA, at erorick@pta.org. Please direct any media inquiries regarding the resolution to Heidi May Wilson, manager of media relations for National PTA, at hmay@pta.org.

**PTA Resolutions and Advocacy**

Resolutions are an important part of the advocacy work of PTA. They are adopted by voting delegates during National PTA’s annual convention and outline the opinion, will or intent of the association to address national problems, situations or concerns that affect children and youth. Resolutions provide direction for advocacy efforts of National PTA; the 54 Congresses of PTA; and regional, council and local PTAs. Resolutions empower PTA members, leaders and public policy and program teams to build partnerships, form coalitions, increase awareness, develop programs and advocate for federal, state and local policies.

**Development of LGBTQ Resolution**

National PTA and its constituent associations believe that every child deserves to go to school excited to learn in a safe and nurturing environment, without the fear of bullying, violence or discrimination. It has long been a top priority of PTA to make sure all children have a safe, supportive and positive environment in which to thrive and learn.

A collaborative group of volunteer PTA leaders developed the LGBTQ resolution and sought to ensure the language is representative of the mission, values and priorities of PTA. The collaborative working group consisted of National PTA’s vice president of advocacy, representatives from California State PTA, Florida PTA, Indiana PTA and Massachusetts PTA; and a representative from each of the following National PTA committees: Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach; Health and Safety; and Legislation. The resolution was shaped by volunteers and elected leadership representing 25 states across the country.

The resolution was reviewed and approved by the National PTA Resolutions Committee and then submitted to the National PTA Board of Directors for their consideration. The National PTA Board of Directors thoroughly reviewed and approved the resolution at its January 2016 meeting. The resolution was then considered and adopted by voting delegates at the 2016 Annual National PTA Convention & Expo in Orlando, Fl.
Embracing Diversity: Welcoming LGBTQ Families to PTA

Ellen Kahn, Director
Children, Youth, and Families Program and
Tony Bonetti, PTA President

Welcoming Schools
A project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation
Goals of this webinar

- Increase understanding of the LGBTQ parent community
- Identify potential barriers to LGBTQ inclusion
- Reflect on current PTA culture/norms
- Learn about ally/affirming behavior
- Differentiate “tolerant” from “welcoming”
- Become more intentional in your efforts to welcome LGBTQ families
Welcoming Schools

A comprehensive program to improve elementary school climate with training, lesson plans, and resources in four key areas:

- Embrace Family Diversity
- Create LGBTQ-inclusive schools
- Prevent bias-based bullying
- Support transgender & gender-expansive youth
Modern Families

• More than 1.5 million children are adopted
• Almost 3 million children identify as being of more than one race.
• 6.5 million children live with their grandparents
• An estimated 3 million LGBTQ adults are raising 6 million children.
LGBTQ Families and Parents

• Various LGBTQ family structures
• LGBTQ individuals can become parents through giving birth, adoption, foster care, kinship care, surrogacy, donor insemination, and different-sex relationships
• LGBTQ-headed families are enormously diverse – geographically, ethnically, in terms of gender, age, religion, socioeconomic status, and more.
Beliefs and Assumptions About our LGBTQ-headed Families

• Children with LGBTQ parents will be bullied or ostracized.
• The child may become LGBTQ because of having an LGBTQ parental role model.
• The child will be worse off than children raised by a mother and father.

NONE of these are borne out of or supported by evidence!
What’s of concern for LGBTQ parents?

- LGBTQ parents face bias and discrimination, both overt and subtle
- LGBTQ parents may not have the same legal or social standing as married, heterosexual parents
- LGBTQ parents may be cautious about coming out/being out
- LGBTQ parents are eager to find support, allies, and to connect with other LGBT parents in their schools
- LGBTQ parents worry that their children will be targeted
Signs of an Unwelcoming Culture

- Communicating a belief that differences are deficits
- When children don’t feel safe or comfortable talking about their families
- Not being invited to school events and opportunities
- Not being acknowledged at school events and opportunities
- Unenforced anti-harassment or anti-bullying policies
Missteps and Micro-aggressions

Assumptions:

“What does your husband/wife do?”

“Wow, she must have your husband’s curly hair.”

“Is it mom’s night off?”

Unintentional exclusion:

Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Moms

“Family Tree” activities

Forms with “mother/father” versus “parent/guardian”
Rolling Out the Welcome Mat for LGBTQ Parents

• Using gender-neutral language where we might assume a nuclear family structure
  – “Parent or guardian” instead of “Mother and father”

• Always include and respect LGBTQ parents in activities that welcome or require the involvement of families and parents

• Encourage diverse representations of families

• Examine PTA guidelines and policies to ensure inclusion of LGBTQ parents
PTA role in Influencing School Culture

- Forms: permission slips, registration
- Visual Images: hallways, classrooms
- Core Curriculum: lesson plans
- “Hidden Curriculum”: what is and isn’t said
- “Hidden” curriculum---what isn’t said
- Rituals: Mother’s and Father’s Day
- Anti-bullying programs, enrichment activities
LGBTQ Inclusion is good for your PTA!

- Unique perspective on diversity and inclusion
- Sends positive message to other LGBTQ and diverse parent communities
- Can help identify opportunities for the school to better support LGBTQ students
- Parent engagement is directly connected to our child’s social and academic success
- Breaking down stereotypes and serving as role models for students
“When someone with the authority of a teacher describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.”

--Adrienne Rich
Five Key Steps To Take

1. Organize a “Family Night”.
2. Host a PTA Movie event.
3. Practice responding to children’s questions.
4. Share lesson plans with your child’s teachers.
5. Recommend picture books inclusive of all kinds of families.

Welcoming Schools
A project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation
1. Organize a Family Night

- Panel to share and learn about different family structures in your school community and how to better support all families and children.
- Ask questions about how families describe and/or talk about their family with their children.
2. **Host a PTA Film Night**

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**Engage Parents to Address Bullying In Our Children’s Schools With Two Powerful Films**

The Respect for All Project (a program of GroundSpark) and Welcoming Schools (a project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation) present a new way for parents and guardians to come together to talk with staff about promoting respect, supporting diversity, and cultivating ally behavior.

**An Evening of Film and Dialogue Featuring**

- **LET'S GET REAL**
  The highly acclaimed documentary about middle school students grappling with name-calling, bullying, and bias, directed by Academy-award winner Debra Chasnoff (35 mins)

- **WHAT CAN WE DO? Bias, Bullying, and Bystanders**
  A new short film that shows teachers engaging elementary school students in lesson plans and conversations about bullying and bias (12 mins)

**What's Covered**
- What kinds of bullying are our students experiencing and observing?
- How often does bullying relate to bias based on factors like race, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, economic status, religion, country of origin, physical or learning abilities?
- How can all members of school communities promote respect and ally behavior among students?

**Ideal for**
- PTOs and PTAs
- Community groups

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**Welcoming Schools**
A project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation
3. Practice Responding to Children’s Questions About Family Diversity

WHO CAN MARRY WHOM?
INCLUSIVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MARRIAGE

With the U.S. Supreme Court decision on marriage equality, schools and educators will be looking for ideas and resources to help them talk about family diversity. When students ask about families with two moms or two dads, be prepared to respond with simple, straightforward answers.

Review our checklist, to ensure that your school is welcoming for all students and their families.

TALKING ABOUT MARRIAGE

☐ Marriage is about love, commitment and responsibility.
☐ Weddings are about celebration and recognition of a committed relationship.
☐ People can fall in love and want to be in a relationship, no matter their gender.
☐ The U.S. Supreme Court decision allows for marriage equality in all 50 states.
☐ All families deserve respect, including families with two moms and two dads.

SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

“Can Jorge’s dads get married? I thought two men couldn’t get married.”

“Yes, his dads can get married now. This summer, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that all the states should allow two men, two women, or a man and a woman to get married.”

“Two men or two women can also get married in a lot of other countries around the world.”

“Why would two women or two men want to get married?”

“Because they love each other and want to be together as a family — the same reason all people get married. They want to make a commitment to each other and care for each other for the rest of their lives.”

RESOURCES FROM WELCOMINGSCHOOLS.ORG

Books Featuring Diverse Families

Books with Two Moms & Two Dads

Welcoming Lesson Plans

Ways to help students feel seen in your classroom including Love Makes a Family and Identity Poems.

Teachable Moments

Be prepared to answer students’ questions and to interrupt bullying.

What Can We Do?

Bias, Bullying & Bystanders

A short professional development film.
4. Lesson Plans About Families

- The Great Big Book of Families (K-2)
- What is a Family? Using Children’s Books to Explore the Meaning of Family (K-3)
- Tree of Caring: Alternative Family Tree Activities (K-3)
- Personal Narratives to Explore Family and Learn More About One Another (4-6)
5. Picture Books About Families

Book Lists:

- “Diverse Books Featuring All Kinds of Families”
- “Inclusive of LGBTQ Family Members and Characters”
- “Families and Immigration—Picture Books and Middle Readers”
- “Books that Feature Two Moms and Two Dads in Honor of Marriage Equality”
Every Student Should Feel Safe Talking About Their Family at School
welcomingschools.org

Resources For Your School
Find books for your classroom, ready-to-use lesson plans, and ways to create a more welcoming school community. See All Resources

New to Welcoming Schools?
Download our Starter Kit that includes information on creating a better school environment with lesson plans, books, and tips.

Diverse Books For Your School
A simple way to let students and families know your school welcomes everyone is to integrate books into your curriculum that reflect diversity.

Find Books

Answering Challenging Questions
We provide ways to answer challenging questions so you'll be prepared to get your students the information they need.

Prepare Answers

Bring Us To Your School
Research & Case Studies
Our Films

Our new website is mobile responsive!
Thank you!!!

Ellen Kahn

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Questions?