



## PERSPECTIVES *for a* DIVERSE AMERICA

### Facing the School Dropout Dilemma: The interaction of sexual orientation with school dropout rates

[The American Psychological Association (APA) published “Facing the School Dropout Dilemma: The interaction of sexual orientation with school dropout rates” on its website in 2012. The APA is widely regarded as the most prominent professional organization for psychologists in the United States. ]

The American Psychological Association (APA) published “Facing the School Dropout Dilemma: The interaction of sexual orientation with school dropout rates” on its website in 2012. The APA is widely regarded as the most prominent professional organization for psychologists in the United States.

Precise statistics on dropout rates among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students (LGBT) are difficult to find, although some have estimated that almost a third of LGBT students drop out of high school, more than triple the national rate (Bart, 1998).

- The main cause of dropout among LGBT high school students appears to be the hostile school climate created by continual bullying and harassment from peers due to their sexual orientation. Nearly nine out of 10 LGBT students (86.2 percent) experienced harassment at school in the past year, three-fifths (60.8 percent) felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and about a third (32.7 percent) skipped a day of school in the past month due to feeling unsafe (Kosciw, Diaz & Greytak, 2008).
- A national survey data found that LGBT students fared worse on many measures of academic achievement and school engagement than their peers (i.e., having a lower GPA, higher likelihood of failing a class, and less positive feelings towards teachers or school in general) (Pearson, Muller & Wilkinson, 2007).
- LGBT students stand to benefit from school policies that counteract bullying and harassment; support the coming out process, and reaffirm the dignity and rights of all students (APA, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

This excerpt is reproduced with permission from American Psychological Association. (2012). Facing the school dropout dilemma. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/school-dropout-prevention.aspx>. Copyright © 2012 American Psychological Association. Any further use requires written permission from APA.