

CALL TO ACTION FOR SCHOOL LEADERS:

Affirm the Values of Inclusion and Respect

GLSEN is among nine leading national education organizations to announce a [national call to action](#) affirming the right of all students to attend school in an environment free from fear, violence, and intimidation, including those who are black, brown, undocumented, LGBTQ, and Muslim.

Below are suggestions and considerations for education leaders and school staff working to publicly affirm and discuss the values of respect and inclusion within their unique educational settings.

PUBLICLY REAFFIRM THE INCLUSIVE VALUES THAT ARE THE FOUNDATION OF HEALTHY LEARNING CULTURES

- Verbalize your commitment to safe and inclusive schools through school-wide P.A. announcements, class meetings and discussions, assemblies, athletic events, school board meetings, staff gatherings, automated voicemail messages, social media posts and/or other immediate modes of communication.
- Write a letter to families affirming the school or classroom values and why they are important. Send the letter home with students or in the mail.
- Post a statement on the district, school or class website, Facebook page or learning platform that affirms the right of all students to learn in safe and inclusive environments.

KEEP IN MIND

- It is important to assure students, staff, families and community members that you take the physical and emotional safety of all students seriously. Be specific in your commitment to supporting all students, regardless of race, color, national origin, immigration status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion. If any local incidents of hate or violence have taken place, denounce them directly and encourage the reporting of any further incidents.
- You can use existing policies, procedures and programs to remind students, staff, families and community members of the school's commitment to respect, inclusion and equity.
- Make sure all stakeholders can access your statements by ensuring they are spoken/written in the various languages present in the school, in writing and in person.

LEAD A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY ON THE CORE VALUES OF RESPECT AND INCLUSION AT THE HEART OF ALL LEARNING

- Discuss the importance of respect and inclusion with students in both formal and informal ways. Lead conversations during class meetings, assemblies, homeroom, lunchtime, and after school. Engage your student leadership teams, peer mediators, cultural and identity-based clubs, athletic teams and other student groups in the conversation.
- Meet with school and/or district staff during staff meetings, PLCs or grade-level/department team meetings to discuss ways they can ensure that all students are safe and welcome as part of the learning community. Commit to supporting staff in their efforts to create and sustain safe and inclusive learning environments.
- Ask the PTA to host an event where school values are discussed and families are encouraged to teach respect outside of school.

- Plan a special family event or convene an existing group and lead a conversation on diversity, inclusion and respect.
- Use social media to engage all stakeholders in the discussion. Share school values, relevant resources, and positive examples of community building and student voices on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and/or other online platforms.

KEEP IN MIND

- You can't and don't have to do this alone. Leverage the strengths of your team and engage a diversity of stakeholders. Validate people's experiences and be open to feedback. Model respectful dialogue and hold others accountable for their words and actions.
- Foster meaningful dialogue by focusing on what is best for students instead of debating political viewpoints. Be clear about how your learning community will support all students, particularly those who may be feeling unsafe or vulnerable.
- Remember that some families and community members may not feel comfortable or safe having these conversations on a school campus, especially if there has been a recent incident of hate or violence. Consider holding a discussion or event at a local community center or make home visits.

CONSIDER POSTING A STATEMENT REGARDING THESE CORE VALUES THROUGHOUT THEIR SCHOOLS AND/OR ALL THE SCHOOLS WITHIN THEIR DISTRICT

- Post new or existing values statements school- and/or system-wide in classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, cafeterias, libraries, offices and other places students congregate.
- Print visible reminders of the school's core values on school notebooks, pencils, posters, folders, pins and staff badges/lanyards.
- Invite the school community to create positive slogans, paint value-themed murals and display messages of respect in school and office building entrances.
- Include these values in student handbooks, new student and family orientations, policies and procedures, codes of conduct, district/school/classroom websites and other places where stakeholders learn about the school.

KEEP IN MIND

- Any statements you post should be available in the languages present in your community to ensure the broadest reach and to model inclusive behavior.
- Your leadership can and will make a difference in the lives of students by ensuring that everyone can attend school and learn without being the target of bias, discrimination or violence because of who they are.

Creating and sustaining safe and inclusive learning environments for all students is an ongoing process that takes commitment and ongoing reminders. The more students, staff and families are reminded of your commitment to respectful and inclusive learning environments, the more effective the message will be.