

# Exploring the School Climate for Gender and Sexuality Minority Students and Staff in Nova Scotia

A Survey of NSTU Teachers  
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# Table of Contents

<b>1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4.0 RESULTS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4.1 Online Survey Demographics</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4.2 Quantitative Results</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4.2.1 Resources:</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4.2.2 Policies and Procedures:</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4.2.3 Safety:</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4.2.4 Understanding Challenges:</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4.2.5 Professional Development:</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4.3 Qualitative Results</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>4.3.1 Theme #1: Fostering Safer Schools Environments for Teachers who are ‘out’</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>4.3.2 Summary of Safety:</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>4.3.3 “Our School Is Safe”:</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>4.3.4 Theme #2: Additional Suggestions: Improving LGBTQ Culture and Creating Safer Learning Environments</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>4.3.5 Ways to Challenge School Culture:</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>4.3.6 Other Comments:</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>6.0 CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>16</b>

## 1.0 Executive Summary



**Executive Summary:** This report summarizes the findings of a 2014/2015 survey conducted as part of the national Reducing Stigma, Promoting Resilience study, funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The purpose of the survey was two fold: first, to better understand how Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) members perceive the school climate as it pertains to teacher, student and school staff sexual orientation and gender identity issues. The second goal of the survey was to collect respondent's ideas for creating safer school environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer (LGBTQ) teachers, students and staff.

### **Overall Results:**

- It is the shared responsibility of all administrators, staff, teachers, and students to create safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ people in Nova Scotia Schools.
- There are still challenges to creating safer school environments for LGBTQ students, teachers and school staff
- NSTU teachers and school staff could benefit from additional resources and training on LGBTQ issues
- In order to ensure the safety of LGBTQ students, teachers and school staff, stronger LGBTQ policies and policy evaluation are required
- Action is required to ensure the safety of NSTU teachers discussing LGBTQ issues in the classroom
- NSTU teachers and school staff require additional LGBTQ-focused Personal Development sessions
- Most NSTU teachers and school staff value ongoing collaboration with the LGBTQ community

## 2.0 Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of a 2014/2015 survey conducted as part of the national CIHR-funded study, Reducing Stigma, Promoting Resilience. This research is part of a national multi-site research project, under principal investigator Dr. Elisabeth Saewyc, Professor of Nursing, University of British Columbia and investigator Dr. Jacqueline Gahagan, Professor of Health Promotion, Dalhousie University. The survey was conducted in partnership with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU), and distributed to teachers through the union's Professional Development Office. The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding of NSTU school teachers' perceptions of school climate, as it pertains to sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and to identify ideas for creating safer school environments for LGBTQ\* students and staff.

## 3.0 Methodology

Data collection was completed through two separate surveys. The original paper survey was followed by a, slightly amended, online version. Demographic information was collected for the online version of the survey, only. Some questions differed between the two surveys. These differences are described in this report, otherwise the results are combined and reported together.

## 4.0 Results

Five hundred teachers responded to the survey. There were a total of 319 English online respondents, 7 French online respondents and 174 paper survey respondents. (Note: the 7 French online surveys were excluded from this report, as these were not translated due to limited resources).

### 4.1 Online Survey Demographics

Of the 319 online respondents 118 (37%) were elementary school teachers, 105 (32.9%) were high school teachers and 97 (30.4%) junior high school teachers. Of the 31(10%) respondents who selected the "Other" employment category, 17 (55%) worked in a college, 5 (16%) as counsellors, 1 (3%) as a school psychologist, 1 (3%) as a principal, 1 (3%) within student services, and 4 (13%) worked in specialist positions. Of the 319 online respondents,

191 (60%) had been employed for 11 years or more, whereas 101 (32%) had been employed for 10 years or less (excludes missing responses).

The highest response rate came from the Halifax Regional School Board with 107 (36.5%) people responding. The second highest participation rate came from the Chignecto-Central School board, with 52 (17.7%) respondents, and the third highest response rate came from the Cape Breton-Victoria school board with 42 (14.3%) people responding. Online survey responses were also received from: The Annapolis Valley Regional, Straight Regional, South Shore Regional, Tri-County, Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial, and Mikmaw Kinamatneway school boards.

## 4.2 Quantitative Results

**4.2.1 Resources:** Paper survey respondents were asked if they have access to timely & relevant school resources in order to support students with specific needs related to their sexual and/or gender identity (e.g. LGBTQ). A little less than half (43%) of the respondents agreed that they have timely access, 21% were neutral, 24% disagreed, 4% fully disagreed (1% missing). Two separate questions were asked of online survey respondents concerning timeliness of access and relevance of access. Similar results were shown for the online survey responses: 5% of respondents fully agreed, 31% agreed, 28% were neutral, 18% disagreed, 3% fully disagreed (15% missing). Of the 319 online respondents 5% fully agreed that the materials provided to them were relevant to addressing LGBTQ student's needs. Of the remainder 31% respondents agreed, 26% were neutral, 21% disagreed, 3% fully disagreed (15% missing). These results indicate that some respondents feel there is room to improve the quality of the resources provided to teachers, in order to support them in addressing the needs of LGBTQ students.

Open-ended suggestions for improvements to resources included:

- LGBTQ training for school staff and teachers (34%)
- Greater access to relevant websites (23%)
- Greater access to multiple resource sites (20%)
- Continued support for the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA's) (18%)
- Greater access to other LGBTQ resources (5%)

Online respondents were asked if gender neutral washrooms are a necessary resource to have in schools, and if more LGBTQ policy information is required. A little less than half of

respondents (45%) said that gender neutral washrooms are a necessary resource for schools, and slightly over half (51%) reported requiring additional LGBTQ policy information.

Open-ended suggestions for additional LGBTQ resources included:

- Information about LGBTQ policy improvement
- How to create safer environments for LGBTQ teachers, school staff and students
- Support for guidance counsellors working with LGBTQ students
- Greater access to materials and curriculum resources that support teachers in addressing LGBTQ issues, including elementary specific resources
- Additional PD training for teachers and school staff. (For example: strategies for teaching sensitivity training to students and parents)
- Support at the School Board and administration level

Other open-ended responses suggested that teachers who have knowledge of LGBTQ issues act as positive role models for other teachers, by sharing their knowledge and providing support for LGBTQ students. One particular respondent suggested that teachers should demonstrate open and active support for LGBTQ students through providing access to resources that support LGBTQ students:

*“Access to people or things to support LGBTQ [students] and ways to show the students support. Appropriate bulletin boards, etc. It does not help to have policies or books that no one reads.”*

This respondent pointed to the importance of informal supports for LGBTQ students, provided by knowledgeable teachers. However, not all respondents felt knowledgeable enough to provide this kind of informal support. Overall, respondents indicate that offering LGBTQ training to teachers is an important resource for educators. Respondents indicated that access to websites and resources with LGBTQ-specific information was important, as well as support for GSAs. When asked what resources would be helpful, the most common open-ended responses were: stronger policy support from administration, LGBTQ elementary specific resources, and use of inclusive language.

**4.2.2 Policies and Procedures:** Survey respondents were asked if there are policies and procedures in place within their schools which ensure that LGBTQ teachers and school staff feel safe to be ‘out’ within the school setting. Nearly half (44%) of the respondents fully agreed or agreed there are school policies in place to protect LGBTQ staff and students, 25% were neutral and 21% disagreed or fully disagreed (11% missing). This result indicates that

there is room to improve school policies and procedures, in order to ensure LGBTQ staff feel safe being 'out' at work. It is important to note that policies addressing the rights of LGBTQ staff members vary by school and location, there is no set of policies applied across Nova Scotia schools. Individual school policies vary with respect to how staff and students are expected to address LGBTQ issues, and some schools may not have LGBTQ specific policies at all.

**4.2.3 Safety:** Almost half (49%) of respondents agreed or fully agreed that their schools have a safe environment for teachers to discuss LGBTQ issues with students, free from repercussion. Of the remaining respondents, 18 % were neutral and, 23% disagreed or fully disagreed (11% missing). Respondents who disagreed or fully disagreed indicated that they expected negative repercussions for discussing LGBTQ issues, even though sexual orientation and gender identity is included in the Nova Scotia elementary curriculum.

**4.2.4 Understanding Challenges:** When respondents were asked if they understand the challenges faced by LGBTQ students in their schools, 69% fully agreed or agreed that they *do* understand the challenges that LGBTQ students face. Of the remaining respondents, 13% were neutral, 7% disagreed, and 1% fully disagreed (11% missing). The high percentage of positive responses to this question could indicate that teachers and school staff have had extensive training in LGBTQ issues. However, this result may potentially reflect a gap in respondent's understanding, concerning the complexity of challenges faced by LGBTQ students. (Note: since the number of respondents who self-identify as LGBTQ is unknown, respondents' first hand experience of challenges facing LGBTQ youth is unknown).

**4.2.5 Professional Development:** Survey respondents were asked if they have attended professional development (PD) sessions, concerning sexual orientation and gender identity issues, within the last five years. Well over half (56%) of respondents were confident that they have participated in LGBTQ PD sessions, and 5% said they believed they had participated, but were not completely sure.

Of the survey participants who said they had attended, or thought they had attended:

- 36% had attended a university session
- 19% attended a NSTU session
- 18% attended a School Board session
- 15% attended a school session
- 7% attended an outside agency session and

- 4% attended a Department of Education session

PD days were the most common means of training (59%) for teachers and school staff who knew or suggested they had participated in LGBTQ-specific training sessions. Most received either one to two hours of training (44%) while other received over two hours of training (38%). Voluntary participation (68%) was the most common way of receiving LGTQ training. Slightly under half (44%) of participants, who trained in LGBTQ issues, indicated that their training included the participation of sexual orientation and gender identity minority community members. This result may indicate that PD training for LGBTQ issues does not always include individuals who have personally experienced LGBTQ issues.

When survey respondents were asked why they may not have participated in PD sessions, the most common responses were that LGBTQ sessions were not offered (27%), there were competing sessions that were of greater interest (14%) or that the LGBTQ sessions were not mandatory (9%). For those who selected “Other,” some indicated being made aware of LGBTQ sessions after the session had been offered. These findings indicate a need for multiple opportunities for teachers and school staff to attend LGBTQ PD sessions, and the importance of providing mandatory training sessions in order to ensure participation. There also appears to be a need to provide staff with sufficient advance notice of LGBTQ PD opportunities available to them.

### 4.3 Qualitative Results

In the open-ended portion of the survey, respondents were asked to offer suggestions as to how to make school environments safer for openly LGBTQ-identifying teachers and school staff. Respondent’s suggestions and thoughts on this question have been organized into themes, and summarized in the following section.

#### 4.3.1 Theme #1: Fostering Safer Schools Environments for Teachers who are ‘out’

##### **Sub-Theme A: Policy & Support from Administration, School Boards and the NSTU**

##### **Suggestions for Improvement:**



Respondents suggested that school administrators develop LGBTQ specific policies to support LGBTQ staff and students in their schools. Specific suggestions for policy change included: zero tolerance policies; conduct codes, and inclusive hiring practice.

Respondents identified the need for a confidential reporting system for harassment, to ensure the safety of complainants. They also indicated a need for policy to be enforced, and emphasized the importance of there being meaningful consequences for breaching policy. Respondents felt it was important that new and existing policies be more than just “words on paper,” and felt effective change required support from School Boards, Principals and Vice Principals, and all other administrators.

### **Illustrative Quotes**

*“While we finally have guidelines for transgender students the DOE and board have yet to come out with a policy specifically to deal with sexual orientation. Currently it is embedded in our board RCH (Racial Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding, Human Rights) policy but within that policy racial relations is always the focus. We face different issues and need protection of our own policy.”*

*“Policy [is] needed: If a potential administrator/school board employee who is seeking to be in this positions of power does not support human rights (LGBTQ incl.) they should not be hired.”*

*“Make sure that all new admin supports their decision to be ‘out’ and defend this decision to any parents who challenge it.”*

*“Teachers need to know that their employer will stand behind them if they experience prejudice or discrimination. When the school board allows students to “opt out” of lessons related to sexual orientation, the message to LGBT individuals is that they can be overlooked, dismissed, ignored...certainly that they are not supported.”*

*“confidential and anonymous reporting system for harassed and bullied staff where something is actually done about it.”*

## **Sub-Theme B: Cultural Change Through Community Education and Exposure to the LGBTQ Community**

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

In order to change the culture in the school environment respondents suggested that teachers and school staff who are openly 'out' be encouraged to act as role models to students and teachers, in order to "normalize" LGBTQ lifestyles. Respondents also suggested that parents, students and staff who are supportive and knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues act as allies. Allies support LGBTQ staff, teachers and students and advocate for the importance and necessity of LGBTQ-specific education. Lastly, respondents suggested that staff and teachers could contribute to a cultural shift by openly expressing a positive attitude toward being 'out.'

### Illustrative Quotes

*"Exposure and openness to people who are LGBTQ is always helpful. I talk openly about my son and his very healthy and "normal" lifestyle. People are a little taken aback at first when I say my son's husband, but then they hear some of his life story and they are not so 'afraid' of the difference."*

*"Parents have to be more accepting they have to be willing to have their students hear the information without believing it will influence their child's developments."*

*"...men, who are educators in a position of authority, who shut down at the mere discussion of a homosexual relationship are a significant problem and are modeling a dangerous behavior for their students."*

## Sub Theme C: Staff & Student Education and Training

### Suggestions for Improvement

Respondents suggested that teachers and staff could benefit from increased availability of LGBTQ-specific resources and training. They proposed bringing LGBTQ guest speakers in to speak to students about LGBTQ issues and experiences.

### Illustrative Quotes

*"Without adequate and appropriate workshops and information sessions, ignorance will prevail. It is this 'ignorance' that can create a negative attitude or approach to sexual orientation issues in the workplace. I attended the Equity conference hosted by the NSTU this past fall. I learned so much from these sessions and met people who were valuable and informative resources and were LGBTQ or had real life experiences with gender identity minority (LGBTQ)."*

*"Guest speakers for students so they can be educated on what LGBTQ folks experience."*

**4.3.2 Summary of Safety:** As indicated in the previous section outlining the findings categorized in “Theme 1”, several respondents felt that a “zero-tolerance policy” relating to homophobic harassment and bullying at school should be implemented and strictly adhered to. Such policies should also include clear codes of conduct and LGBTQ friendly hiring practices. Many also expressed that education for parents, students, teachers and school staff may be helpful in promoting a safer school learning environment. Some respondents reported facing challenges to fostering safer school learning environments, often as a result of broader cultural issues, but also within the school (e.g. with colleagues). Most respondents suggested increasing available opportunities for teachers, school staff and students to receive LGBTQ education. Other suggestions for improving school LGBTQ culture and safer learning environments included:

- Open discussion with the LGBTQ community and amongst LGBTQ individuals and groups.
- Visible symbols of acceptance in the school (e.g. posters, LGBTQ friendly stickers for teachers’ classroom doors and gender neutral bathrooms, etc.)
- Special LGBTQ events and celebrations.
- Promotion of GSAs.
- Improved hiring practices of LGBTQ teachers and school staff.

A few participants also mentioned the importance of using LGBTQ inclusive language throughout the school and within school documents. This included educating teachers and school staff about ways to avoid heteronormative assumptions in every day conversation. Additionally, respondents suggested formally introducing gender and sexual orientation neutral language into the classroom. Participants also suggested including inclusive examples in textbooks and curriculum, so that LGBTQ students see themselves reflected in every aspect of school life.

**4.3.3 “Our School Is Safe”:** Overall, most participants felt their school had a safe learning environment. It is worth noting that a number of respondents cited the presence of ‘out’ LGBTQ community members as an indicator of a safe school environment. This may indicate a need to improve awareness amongst staff about the hidden challenges LGBTQ individuals face in coming ‘out’. Respondents who provided examples of how their schools foster safe learning environments mentioned a supportive administration, the presence of a GSA within the school and open and supportive colleagues as indicators of safety.

In contrast, a few respondents said they did not know if 'out' staff felt safe. Others indicated that 'out' teachers have confided experiencing discomfort and a general lack of acceptance in their schools and community. Some participants felt that LGBTQ issues are ignored in school, or that teachers and school staff are less accepting of LGBTQ teachers, when compared to students. Some respondents noted that heteronormative, covert and hurtful language and assumptions about sexual minorities contribute to feelings of exclusion (e.g. gossip, assumptions about sexual identity and orientation, etc.).

While some respondents were unclear about what it means to be 'out' or 'closeted', others wondered why a person's sexual orientation is relevant in school. For example, as one participant states: "*why do teachers (LGBTQ or not) need to inform students of their sexuality? It is not an acceptable behaviour for heterosexual teachers and staff to inform students about personal sexual matters, why [is it acceptable] for LGBTQ?*" These comments may suggest the need to improve some teacher's and staff awareness of the numerous ways in which gender and sexual orientation identity can affect personal and work life. One indicator which supports the need for increased awareness amongst staff and teachers is that none of the respondents discussed the ways in which a person's sexual orientation or gender identity might positively inform teaching practice. While some participants felt that LGBTQ teachers are important role models for kids, there was no discussion of ways in which LGBTQ teachers provide essential professional perspectives, as a part of a diverse staff.

#### 4.3.4 Theme #2: Additional Suggestions: Improving LGBTQ Culture and Creating Safer Learning Environments

##### **Sub Theme A: Discussion and Communication that Include LGBTQ Groups and GSAs**

##### **Suggestions for Improvement**

Respondents indicated that it is important for there to be ongoing communication about LGBTQ issues throughout the school community, including in classrooms, amongst colleagues, and with students of all ages. Continuous communication will contribute to proactive verses reactive communication, and foster a safer learning environment. Respondents also indicated the importance of creating safe spaces for open and honest discussion about LGBTQ issues. Providing safe spaces for students, staff and teachers to ask questions, share stories and learn about LGBTQ issues from

one another would contribute to proactive communication and safer learning environments. Respondents suggested several specific approaches to improving communication, including: teachers and staff meeting with LGBTQ groups, and having GSA's make presentations in schools.

### **Illustrative Quotes**

*"I personally have had students tell me what their needs are or what makes them uncomfortable so that I can be a better teacher for them as individuals. I don't want students to feel like they would be hurt on campus if they told their stories but it helps me as an educator."*

*"At our school we have an amazing GSA club. Students and staff (and community) are fairly open and accepting of all orientations. De-stigmatizing is key."*

## **Sub Theme B: Exposure to the LGBTQ community and inclusive language**

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

Respondents indicated it is important to increase student and staff exposure to the LGBTQ community. Respondents felt that increased exposure would heighten people's compassion for, and understanding, of LGBTQ issues and experiences. They also suggested that feelings of compassion and kindness would decrease the use of homophobic language in schools, and increase the use of inclusive language. Respondents felt this was especially important in rural schools, where students, staff and teachers may have had less exposure to members of the LGBTQ community.

### **Illustrative Quotes**

*"Exposure to people from LGBTQ communities and disciplines regarding vocabulary that is acceptable/not in school. When people can connect personally it awakens their compassion/kindness. In my small school, no one is out of the closet."*

*"To have students exposed to diversity in all shapes and forms – especially in rural schools where there isn't a lot of diversity in certain communities."*

## **Sub Theme C: Parents, Staff and Student Education (specifics)**

## Suggestions for Improvement

Respondents made specific suggestions for change, including: the provision of Positive Space Training and mandating of LGBTQ-specific personal development for teachers and staff. Respondents also indicated that participation and support from school leadership is essential for making meaningful change.

### Illustrative Quotes

*“The school leadership must support the GSA and PD sessions regarding LGBTQ. Issues of sexual orientation need to be addressed in PDR (DPS) classes so that all students will be educated and informed.”*

*“Provide organized PD for staff around empathy or creating an environment of understanding and support using Positive Space Training.”*

*“Mandatory PD for all staff. The staff who attend voluntary PD about LGBTQ issues are not the staff that need to be there.... they are already being supportive but trying to increase their support. The ones who avoid that PD because they are uncomfortable or practice behaviour which is not supportive are the ones who need to be there.”*

## Sub Theme D: GSAs

### Suggestions for Improvement

Respondents suggested that in order to shift the LGBTQ culture in schools, that staff and teachers participate in active collaboration with GSAs. They also indicated the importance of engaging varsity athletes in shifting the school culture, in order to destigmatize student participation in GSAs.

### Illustrative Quotes

*“Having an active and successful GSA is a great cultural influence in the school.”*

*“I think it is also imperative that varsity sports teams take an active role in GSAs and changing school cultures. A Gay-Straight/Gender-Sexuality Alliance is still considered to be a "guilty by association" organization and a minority of adolescents possess the strength of character and self confidence to defy that expectation. If a hockey player says something outrageous, their friends will laugh in support, their peers will laugh in discomfort, and the LGBTQ student(s) in the class will sink into their chair trying to smile so as not to self-identify.”*

## Sub Theme D: Outside Support

### Suggestions for Improvement

Respondents suggested that schools increase and strengthen existing partnerships with outside agencies focused on LGBTQ issues, such as The Youth Project.

### Illustrative Quotes

*“There needs to be an atmosphere where ideas are shared and status quo is questioned, where human rights are understood and upheld. Let’s start speaking and listening to one another. This requires us to partner with other agencies, groups whose ideas and insights are different from our own.”*

*“Bringing in outside sources (such as Youth project) for both staff and students.”*

**4.3.5 Ways to Challenge School Culture:** As indicated in the previous section outlining the findings categorized in “Theme 2”, most participants encouraged open discussion, dialogue and exposure to LGBTQ issues for shifting school culture and many felt that GSA and LGBTQ lead education initiatives are invaluable for improving school culture. Some respondents indicated the need to incorporate LGBTQ education as part of a broader diversity curriculum, so that LGBTQ students feel included as a vital part of the school community. Respondents also stressed that LGBTQ education should be supported by leadership through promotion and perhaps mandating LGBTQ PD. One participant suggested “Positive Space Training” be offered to teachers and school staff. Some also cited the value of working with outside agencies such as the Youth Project and the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia.

**4.3.6 Other Comments:** In the final open-ended survey question, some respondents reiterated the need to improve the overall LGBTQ school climate within their individual schools. A common response was to raise concerns specifically related to elementary schools. Several participants expressed a need for elementary specific resources and others indicated that the importance of addressing LGBTQ issues with students at an early age. Others did not feel that LGBTQ issues are relevant at the elementary level and some pointed to the vulnerabilities that elementary teachers might feel when discussing these issues. One participant states:

*“This is a subject that I would not feel comfortable addressing at an elementary level. I feel that if a student at my age level required guidance, then they would go to see the*

*guidance counsellor. I am not trained to deal with this topic and I would never feel comfortable talking to students about this. In today's world you could say the wrong thing and get reprimanded. I would not take the chance."*

This response may indicate the need to improve awareness of elementary level curriculum, pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity. It may also suggest that there is a need to support teachers to meet these outcomes. Another participant felt that some teachers, regardless of the grade level taught, feel that their course subjects are unrelated to LGBTQ issues and so fail to consider the need to make their classrooms inclusive. This may indicate a need to improve guidance and education around what LGBTQ inclusivity means within the context of, for example, a math class.

Finally, one respondent indicated that it is often one student who "paves the way" for those that come after, suggesting that too often safety around LGBTQ issues may not be seen as a priority until someone is brave enough to speak up. A few participants expressed frustration with the level of support they have received for LGBTQ issues. One of the most common responses to the final question was an expression of gratitude for the opportunity to participate in a survey on this subject.

## 5.0 Recommendations

The key message indicated in the survey findings is: **it is the shared responsibility of all administrators, staff, teachers, and students to create safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ people in Nova Scotia Schools.** Shifting the culture in a school cannot depend solely on 'out' students, teachers or staff. Cooperation from the entire school community is required to create a sustainable movement for change, otherwise the movement will end when the handful of engaged students, staff and teachers either graduate or change jobs.

Building on this point, the following is a list of practical steps recommended NSTU members take in order to make Nova Scotia schools safer, more inclusive, and more accepting of difference.

- 1) The need for additional LGBTQ resources and training for teachers and school staff.
- 2) The need to develop stronger LGBTQ school policies.
- 3) The need to develop evaluation for LGBTQ policy adherence.
- 4) The need to foster safer school environments for teachers to discuss LGBQ issues in class.
- 5) Mandated LGBTQ-focused PD sessions for teachers and staff.



- 6) Collaboration amongst school administrators, parents, teachers, NSTU school staff and student to promote safe and inclusive school environments for LGBTQ students, teachers and school staff.
- 7) Ongoing collaboration with the LGBTQ community (including GSAs and the Youth Project).
- 8) The development of further resources to address challenges faced by LGBTQ students, teachers and school staff are indicated.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Overall the NSTU teachers and school staff offered comprehensive, thoughtful feedback. Key areas for improvement include the need for additional LGBTQ resources and training for teachers and school staff, the need to develop stronger LGBTQ school policies, the need to develop evaluation for LGBTQ policy adherence, the need to foster safer school environments for teachers to discuss LGBQ issues in class, mandated LGBTQ-focused PD sessions for teachers and staff, collaboration amongst school administrators, parents, teachers, NSTU school staff and student to promote safe and inclusive school environments for LGBTQ students, teachers and school staff. In addition, ongoing collaboration with the LGBTQ community (including GSAs and the Youth Project) is warranted, and the development of further resources to address challenges faced by LGBTQ students, teachers and school staff are indicated.