Inclusive Curriculum Implementation Guidance

Equality Illinois | Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, a program of Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago | The Legacy Project

ICACI

ICACI

**Inclusive Curriculum
Advisory Council of Illinois**

The organizations that make up ICACI

Equality Illinois

Equality Illinois (EI) is the state's civil rights organization for LGBTQ+ people. EI envisions a fair and unified Illinois where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where all people live freely regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Among their initiatives and programs, EI defends LGBTQ+ civil rights from anti-LGBTQ+ attacks and advances pro-LGBTQ+ policies, with a focus on education, health care, and criminal justice.

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, a program of Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

This program, referred to as **The Alliance**, promotes safety, support and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) youth in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing, and research. The Alliance's areas of expertise include content creation, professional development, and partnership building.

The Legacy Project

The award-winning **Legacy Project** works to educate students and the general public about the many roles Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) people have played in the advancement of history and culture. They are committed to challenging the social and cultural marginalization that leads to bullying LGBTQ youth.

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A Note to Educators

The impact educators have on their students is profound. Educators not only provide academic instruction, but are often viewed as trusted adults who serve as mentors, provide social-emotional support, serve as advisors for extra-curricular clubs and activities, among additional responsibilities. Within these multifaceted roles, supportive educators and school staff have a positive effect on any student, but especially so for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students who often feel unsafe and unwelcome in school.[1]

Impact on Students and School Climate

LGBTQ+ youth – especially Black and Brown LGBTQ+ youth – face a disproportionate amount of challenges both in and outside the classroom.

- 5.6% of high school students report hearing anti-LGTBQ+ language frequently[2]

- 35% of LGBTQ+ students drop out of high school (three times the national average)[3]

- 65% of all homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+[4]

- Queer youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than cisgender and/or straight youth[5]

The challenges are amplified for Black and Brown LGBTQ+ youth. According to Human Rights Campaign (HRC), 80% of LGBTQ+ youth of color have personally experienced racism.[6] While only 10.1% of white students experienced harassment at school based on both their LGBTQ+ identity and race, between 34.7 and 47.2% of students of color (depending on racial/ethnic identity) experienced this two-fold victimization.[7]

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[1] GLSEN (2019). National School Climate Survey.
[2] GLSEN (2019). National School Climate Survey.
[3] GLSEN (2019). National School Climate Survey.
[4] GLSEN (2016). Educational exclusion: Drop out, push out, and school-to-prison pipeline among LGBTQ youth. National Coalition for the Homeless (2017). LGBTQ Homelessness.
[5] CDC (2016). CDC (2016). Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance.[6] HRC (2018). LGBTQ Youth Report.
[7] GLSEN (2019). National School Climate Survey.

According to GLSEN[8], determining whether a school is affirming or hostile to LGBTQ+ students depends on the resources that they have access to, including:

- Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) or similar clubs
- School policies, such as anti-bullying/harassment and transgender/gender nonconforming student policies
- Supportive school staff
- Curricular resources that are inclusive of LGBTQ-related topics

All of these components are critical and ultimately contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of all students - not only LGBTQ+ students. Specifically including LGBTQ+ history in the curriculum:

- Instills in students the intrinsic worth of all individuals and the value of a diverse society
- Encourages positive educational outcomes and success of all students
- Provides LGBTQ+ students an opportunity to see themselves reflected in the classroom
- Promotes the creation of a safe and affirming school climate, which lowers rates of bullying, harassment, and discrimination

More than 75% of LGBTQ+ students in schools across the country with an inclusive curriculum said their peers were accepting of LGBTQ+ people, compared to just 39.6% of those in schools without an inclusive curriculum. Additionally, LGBTQ+ students in schools with an inclusive curriculum are less likely to skip school and are less likely to say they might not graduate high school.[9]

To approach this guidance is to begin the important work of transforming the classroom into one that is reflective of the experience of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Inclusive Curriculum Implementation Guidance was developed by members of the Inclusive Curriculum Advisory Council of Illinois (ICACI), in collaboration with educators, as a tool for schools to implement this new requirement.

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[8] GLSEN (2019). National School Climate Survey.

[9] GLSEN (2019). National School Climate Survey.

How to Use This Guide

This guide will support school administrators and educators to begin the process of crafting and integrating an inclusive curriculum in the classroom. Through the use of specific frameworks and learning strategies, the goal is to meet the law's requirements enhance the learning of all students. Through this guidance, teachers and administrators will be able to:

- Understand the Illinois Inclusive Curriculum Law and what it means for classrooms

- Identify and comprehend age-appropriate content

- Build the confidence to access offered resources, such as professional development, lesson plans, and other tools

- Identify resources to assess classrooms and schools for affirming practices

- Learn ways to support educators in implementing an inclusive curriculum with fidelity

There is a wide range of knowledge, experience, and comfort in implementing an inclusive curriculum among Illinois educators. There are many educators who already implement an inclusive curriculum in their classrooms and school buildings and many educators for whom this is their first opportunity. With that in mind, please consider the following best practices:

- **Use what is most familiar.** Teachers and students will be most successful when engaging with materials that are both easy to understand and feel similar to other subject areas. There are a myriad of resources that prevent the need to "reinvent the wheel." If LGBTQ+ content is completely new to an educator, the 'Tools and Resources' section of this guide will get them started.

- **Clear and simple is best.** The materials used should be no more demanding than the curriculum currently being deployed. What's more, the material should be appropriate for the age group it is being presented to. More information on this can be found in the 'Tools and Resources' section.

- **Collaboration is key.** Reaching out to other educators and administrators who have either already started using an inclusive curriculum or have yet to is a great tactic. Collaborating with others who have varying levels of experience can help address concerns and challenges and share best practices. This process is not meant to be done in isolation.

- **Make sure the plan works for the needs of all students.** One must be mindful of crafting LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum that works for students with different identities, levels of experience, and access to technology. If the curriculum is not accessible, it won't be as effective. More information on this can be found in the 'Affirming Learning Environments' and 'Tools and Resources' sections.

This list is not exhaustive and more information on these best practices can be found further into the document. As language around the law develops and best practices continue to be identified, this guidance will be updated.

Introduction

On August 9, 2019, Governor J.B. Pritzker signed House Bill 246 (Public Act 101-0227) into law. This made Illinois the fifth state in the nation requiring public schools to include instruction and adopt instructional materials that accurately portray the political, economic, and social contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. The law took effect July 1, 2020 with the intent of implementation at the start of the 2020 - 2021 school year. The Inclusive Curriculum Law offers public school students a more accurate, complete, and equitable picture of American society and provides LGBTQ+ students the opportunity to see themselves represented in history.

In 2017, Equality Illinois, Illinois Safe Schools Alliance – a program of Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago – and the Legacy Project banded together to build a coalition of supporters and advocates for passing the law. Once passed, the three organizations formed the Inclusive Curriculum Advisory Council of Illinois (ICACI) with the intent of supporting schools and communities in implementing the law by creating materials and collating tools and resources to support instruction. ICACI works in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, and other stakeholders. This collaboration has helped create the foundation to transform classrooms in Illinois into those that are reflective and protective of the experience of the LGBTQ+ community.

The ICACI understands and recognizes that LGBTQ+ identities intersect with those of race, class, ability, socioeconomic status, and other social considerations, as well as other inclusive curriculum initiatives, including but not limited to women's history and Black History. ICACI is committed to working alongside other curricular leads to ensure the history and contributions of marginalized populations continue to be uplifted and included in educational settings.

Rationale for Why an Inclusive Curriculum is Required

Though the need for the LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum Law has been a source of passionate focus for many people – there are many more who do not understand why it is required, how to comply, what type of content will be included, or what reasonable goals it is intended to achieve. These reactions to this curriculum enhancement being required are understandable, given that LGBTQ+ contributions to world history and culture have been redacted almost entirely from our collective understanding of humanity's story – which is a direct result of *how we were all raised*. Had the education we received contained references to the achievements and contributions of LGBTQ+ people, a requirement to include them now would not be needed because everyone would already know.

Experience and research have shown that students who do not have supportive teachers and school administrations are unlikely to receive LGBTQ-inclusive and affirming instruction without a statewide law requiring it. Why? The educators we consulted – including those who were already inclined to adopt an LGBTQ-inclusive and affirming curriculum – were reluctant to do so because they

1) felt unqualified to teach something they themselves knew little about;

2) lacked ready access to teaching tools and resources to use as supplements;

3) needed certified professional development support to guide their process; and

4) feared controversy and reprisal from school administrators, district officials, parents, and the community.

Only a statewide requirement would provide them with a professional directive to incorporate LGBTQ-inclusive and affirming content into their existing curriculum development.

The lack of awareness about historically significant LGBTQ+ contributions and achievements has rendered every stakeholder in the process – students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the broader community – understandably confused about why an inclusive and affirming curriculum even matters, let alone is needed.

Best Practices in Messaging and Gaining Buy-In (adapted from GLSEN)

When introducing LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum into schools, it is best to do so in conjunction with school administrators and leaders. It is recommended that the decision to prioritize LGBTQ+ inclusion be shared with professional development for educators, and to families at the start of the year on Back to School night. Starting the school year by providing context and framing for the schools' responsibility to provide a safe and

supportive learning environment for all students and articulating a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion makes for a strong start. It also allows for space and time to address any misconceptions or apprehensions about this inclusion.

The following talking points can support the implementation of this law:

- An LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum benefits all students by promoting acceptance and respect, and teaching them more about the diverse people and families in the world.

- Anti-LGBTQ+ bias hurts all children, both those directly affected and those who learn in an atmosphere of fear and tension, afraid to explore their own lives because of worry about disapproval and rejection.

- Beginning these conversations in elementary school will help young people to develop empathy for a diverse group of people, and to learn about identities that might relate to their families or even themselves. It is never too early for schools to lay a foundation of understanding and respect.

- Students of all ages must be given an opportunity to learn that the words "gay," "lesbian," and "transgender" are adjectives that should be used with respect to describe people in their community, not words used in a negative way to hurt, insult, and degrade.

- An inclusive curriculum supports a student's ability to empathize, connect, and collaborate with a diverse group of peers; helps demonstrate just how much LGBTQ+ people have in common with those who are not LGBTQ+; and thus encourages respect for all.

- All students deserve to see themselves in their curriculum, including students who identify as LGBTQ+ and come from LGBTQ+ headed families.

- Teaching an LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum acknowledges the reality that many students come from LGBTQ+ headed families, are being taught by LGBTQ+ educators, and are, increasingly, identifying as LGBTQ+ themselves even in elementary school.

- LGBTQ+ students with inclusive curricula have better academic and mental health outcomes, and are less likely to miss school.[10]

[10] GLSEN (2019). National School Climate Survey.

There may be educators or administrators or parents/guardians who won't be accepting of the requirement or the various forms of LGBTQ+ identity that exist. This is an opportunity to remind whoever you're talking to about the professional responsibility being carried out due to the fact that the Inclusive Curriculum Law is just that -- a law.

Supportive administrators can strengthen this work by addressing families directly. They should be open to hearing their questions, and be careful to distinguish questions or concerns from negative pushback. Inviting families to a panel, coffee, or film screening to discuss diversity initiatives has helped many schools to invite families into this work, to address questions directly, and to identify which families in the school community are allies in this work.

- Example statement from administration: We are conscious of providing age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate lessons and activities that meet all of our students where they are when addressing LGBTQ+-visibility and inclusion. Our goal is to work together as one community through this practice. **We encourage you to reach out to us or our teachers throughout the year if you have any questions or would like further information as we support our students in this important work.**

Inclusive Curriculum Law (ICL) Overview

The Inclusive Curriculum Law of Illinois (also known as Public Act 101-0227 and formerly known as HB 246) was signed into law on August 9, 2019 with the support of over 50 organizations and stakeholders from across the state. The [law went into effect](#)[11] on July 1, 2020 for its implementation in the 2020 – 2021 school year.

School Code and Learning Standards

The new legislation amends the existing School Code by prescribing public schools to study the roles and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)* people in the history of Illinois and the United States. The law does not change the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) learning standards, nor does it include any authority for ISBE to change the standards to reflect the law's provisions. The Illinois content standards provide a description of what students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level, but they are not intended to be a restrictive or exhaustive list of topics.

*LGBT vs. LGBTQ+: What's the difference?

Throughout this document, you will notice that 'LGBT' and 'LGBTQ+' are both used. For the purposes of the ICL and this guidance, those two acronyms are not interchangeable. While 'LGBTQ+' is a more inclusive descriptor of the queer community and the breadth of identies this work serves, the term does not appear in the statutory text of Public Act 101-0227. This document uses 'LGBT' to align with the ICL's explicit parameters for what content must be taught. The outlined strategies for doing so, however, are applicable to, serve, and often mention the 'LGBTQ+' community as a whole.

Grades Taught

The law applies to grades kindergarten through 12, and as with the history of all communities enumerated in Section 27-21 of the School Code, school districts will determine when students learn the role and contributions of LGBT individuals in the history of this country and Illinois. Per Section 27-21, instruction must be included by grade 8.

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[11] Illinois General Assembly (2019). Bill Status of HB0246.

Content

How the content is taught is up to the discretion of school districts. Using resources that already exist and/or developing their own, local school districts will have the flexibility of selecting those elements which both fulfill the requirements of the law and meet the age-appropriate needs of students. Content will focus on LGBT contributions toward existing school subjects including, but not limited to: social studies, literature, science, mathematics, humanities, etc. insofar as these capture the historical development of Illinois and the United States. Age-appropriate content for younger students can include learning about diverse family structures, gender stereotypes, and anti-bullying.

Textbooks

The legislation also makes changes to the textbook block grant program. Authorized by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), textbooks and any other instructional materials must not discriminate against any of the protected classes found under the Illinois Human Rights Act. The law does not require the purchase of new textbooks. The law does include a broad definition of "textbook" to include teaching supplements such as workbooks in bound or loose-leaf form or electronic educational content intended as a principal source of study material for a given class or group. When school districts receive funding through the state's textbook block grant program to purchase new textbooks, the State of Illinois requires that only textbooks which are non-discriminatory, affirming, and include the roles and contributions of individuals and communities protected under the Illinois Human Rights Act be purchased.

Accountability

As with any other policy, educators should be open, transparent, and proactive in addressing questions and concerns from parents and community members related to implementation of the law. It is important to note that all curriculum content must include the roles and contributions of all people protected under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Frameworks and Learning Strategies

"I already have so much on my plate... Where do I start?"

"It may seem daunting, but it's easier than you think!"

Frameworks provide educators with a structure or perspective on an issue or topic, while strategies provide the process for implementation. Although this guidance focuses on social sciences, this framework can be applied to other school subjects such as literature, science, mathematics, or humanities, insofar as these capture the historical development of Illinois and the United States. The following frameworks for an inclusive curriculum provide further context on what is informing implementation guidance:

- Curriculum as Mirror and Window

- Intersectionality

- Inquiry-based learning

Curriculum as Mirror and Window (adapted from GLSEN[11])

An inclusive curriculum is most effective when it both reflects back the experiences of those who might identify the same way and allows all others to be introduced to new ways of thinking and relating to the world. This must be done appropriately, however, without sensationalizing or fetishizing anyone. This work can be illustrated through the metaphor of a mirror and window, respectively.

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculums

Benefit LGBTQ+ students by:

- Validating their existence and experiences

- Reinforcing their value and self-worth

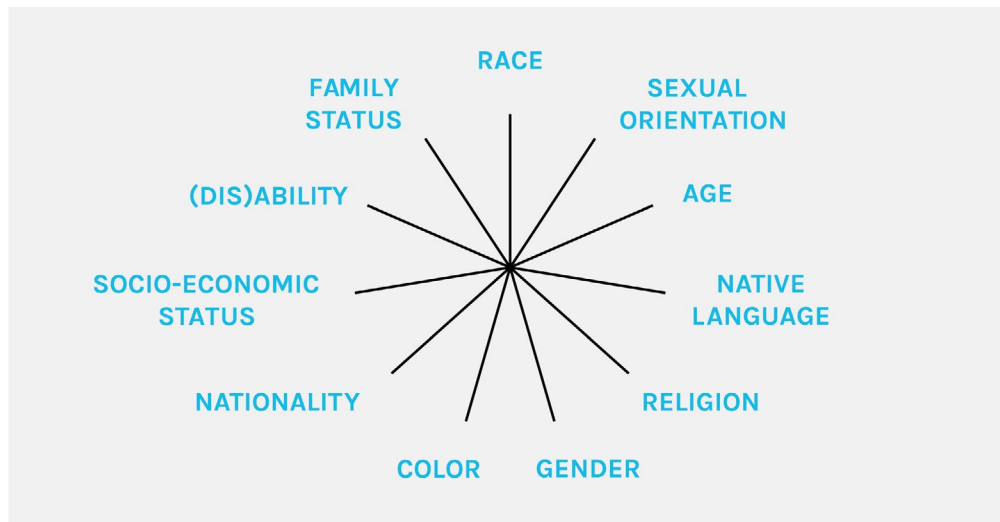- Providing space for their voices

Benefit all students by:

- Exposing them to more inclusive and accurate accounts of history

- Helping them have a better understanding of LGBTQ+ people

- Encouraging them to question stereotypes about LGBTQ+ people

- Promoting acceptance

[11] GLSEN (2019). Developing LGBTQ-Inclusve Classroom Resources

Intersectionality

This theory was first coined by professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to describe how race, class, gender, and other identities "intersect" with one another and overlap in the context of privilege and oppression. Teaching Tolerance offers a 3-minute video to describe the concept here.[13]

In a world where Black and Brown LGBTQ+ young people are disproportionately affected by violence and discrimination in schools, it becomes essential to approach curriculum implementation through an intersectional lens. What's more, this framework provides the entire classroom with an opportunity to delve deeper into and pay tribute to the roles and contributions of Black and Brown LGBTQ+ historical figures.

RACE
FAMILY STATUS
SEXUAL ORIENTATION
(DIS)ABILITY
AGE
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS
NATIVE LANGUAGE
NATIONALITY
RELIGION
COLOR
GENDER

Inquiry-Based Learning

Through the Social Science Standards Revision Task Force and the collaboration of Illinois Classrooms in Action, ISBE adopted inquiry-based learning as a core framework to develop young people's skills in creativity, critical thinking, working in diverse groups to solve complex problems, global awareness, and financial literacy. With each inquiry opportunity, young people can practice and demonstrate these skills through specific areas. Below is an example inquiry-based process for LGBTQ+ integration, in green:

- **Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries**
  - Constructing Essential Questions
    - » *How did the Stonewall Riots incite the gay liberation movement?*

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[13] "Intersectionality 101." YouTube, Learning for Justice, 18 May 2016.

- Constructing Supporting Questions
  » *What or who did the gay liberation movement leave behind?*
- Determining Helpful Sources
  » *Search for textbooks, LGBTQ+ archives, nonfiction books found in public libraries, etc.*

- **Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence**

  - Gathering and Evaluating Sources
    » *Example activity: "swipe right" if you think it's a fact, "swipe left" if you think it's fiction.*
  - Developing Claims and Using Evidence
    » *Marsha P. Johnson was one of the leaders of the Stonewall riots. We know this because...*

- **Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action**

  - Communicating Conclusions
    » *The Stonewall Riots incited the beginning of the gay liberation movement because of x, y, and z...*
  - Critiquing Conclusions
    » *The gay liberation movement did leave groups of LGBTQ+ people behind, however. These include...*
  - Taking Informed Action
    » *Create a fundraiser to send funds to the Sylvia Rivera Law Project. Discuss why doing so is important.*

The goal of using this framework is that young people in the classroom will gain the ability to think critically about the roles and contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals, whether they identify with them or not. With the ability to do so, students will gain the confidence to engage with LGBTQ+-related issues and locate themselves in relation to the topic.

Strategies

While frameworks illuminate the path one should go down for building an inclusive curriculum, strategies are the steps to take down that path. The following reading materials can serve as a foundation for educators and administrators.

Alignment and Integration with Illinois Learning Standards

One recommended strategy involves aligning LGBTQ+ content with the Illinois learning standards to support seamless integration into existing curricula. The social science standards provided by ISBE cultivate civic mindedness, historical thinking, economic decision making, geographic reasoning, and psychological and sociological intellect across all disciplines and grade levels. The learning standards can be used across all school subjects. Please note that the social science standards are currently being reviewed for updating. When the standards are updated, this document will also be updated to conform to any changes in the revised standards.

As a refresher, this is how to read the standards:

How to Read the Standards

	Civic and Political Institutions
K	**SS.CV.1.K.** Describe roles and responsibilities of people in authority
1	**SS.CV.1.1 Explain how all people, not just official leaders, play important roles in a community.**
2	**SS.CV.1.2. Explain what governments are and some of their functions (e.g., making and enforcing laws, protecting citizens, and collecting taxes).**

SS.CV.1.K.
Social Studies

SS.**CV**.1.1
Content Discipline

SS.CV.**1.2.**
1. The Number of the Standard
2. Indicates the grade level

This section focuses on social science standards but the law and the recommendations in this guidance are not limited to social science educators. This strategy integrates curricular content focused on LGBT contributions toward existing school subjects including, but not limited to: social studies, literature, science, mathematics, humanities, insofar as these capture the historical development of Illinois and the United States. The flowchart above provides a starting point.

The following table integrates inquiry-based LGBT content into learning standards located within the school subject of history. This approach meets the law, but is by no means exhaustive. Here, the table is focused on 4th grade, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12. Educators may use many of the same educational materials and texts they currently use and additional resources are listed in the 'Tools and Resources' section below. LGBT content integration can be found underneath 'LGBT Integration Opportunity.' Lesson plans accessed through The Legacy Project's Education Initiative may be used. The Legacy Project's lesson plans can be accessed on both their website and the ICACI's search portal for LGBTQ-inclusive education tools.

TOPICS	HISTORY		
	Grade 4: Our State, Our Nation	**Grade 6-8 (Less Complex)**	**Grade 9-12**
PERSPECTIVES	**SS.H.1.4.** Explain connections among historical contexts and why individuals and groups differed in their perspectives during the same historical period. **LGBT Integration Opportunity** • Why did LGBT people have to hide in society? • What symbols exist (both old and new)) that celebrate LGBT people's differences?	**SS.H.2.6-8.L.C.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time. **LGBT Integration Opportunity** • What were some of the groups that did not believe the LGBT community should have certain rights? • What did the Supreme Court ruling of 2015 change for the LGBT people? • What is 'homophobia' and 'transphobia' and who might experience it at higher levels?	**SS.H.4.9-12.** Analyze how people and institutions have reacted to environmental, scientific, and technological challenges. **SS.H.5.9-12.** Analyze the factors and historical context that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras. **SS.H.6.9-12.** Analyze the concept and persuit of the "American Dream." **SS.H.6.9-12.** Analyze the concept and persuit of the "American Dream." **SS.H.7.9-12.** Identify the roles of individuals, groups, and institutions in people's struggle for safety, freedom, equality, and justice. **SS.H.8.9-12.** Analyze key historical events and contributions of individuals through a variety of perspectives, including those of historically underrepresented groups. **LGBT Integration Opportunity** • How did the AIDS crisis impact the LGBT community? Socially? Politically? Economically? • Why is discrimination and harassment against the LGBT community so prevalent? • What might the "American Dream" mean if you identify as LGBT? How might race and gender impact this perspective at the same time? • What recent events have shaped the LGBT community? How does it impact their safety, freedom, equality, and concept of justice?
HISTORICAL SOURCES AND EVIDENCE	**SS.H.2.4.** Using artifacts and primary sources, investigate how individuals contributed to the founding and development of Illinois. **LGBT Integration Opportunity** • How did Jane Addams contribute to the founding and development of Illinois? • Students can take a field trip to the Hull House located in Chicago.	**SS.H.3.6-8.L.C.** Classify the kinds of historical sources used in a secondary interpretation. **LGBT Integration Opportunity** • Compare one account of Frida Kahlo that fails to describe her LGBT identity with one that discloses it. How does this change the scope of her work? Her life?	**SS.H.9.9-12.** Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them. **LGBT Integration Opportunity** • Describe the reasons why LGBT people in history are often portrayed as being straight/heterosexual or cisgender.

James Banks Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum

James A. Banks, an educational specialist and theorist who served as president of the National Council for the Social Studies, provided four approaches to multicultural curriculum that can be seen here:

LEVEL 4: The Social Action Approach
Students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them.

LEVEL 3: The Transformation Approach
The structure is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups.

LEVEL 2: The Additive Approach
Content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its structure.

LEVEL 1: The Contributions Approach
Focuses on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements.

Adapted from Banks, James A. (2010) *Approaches to Multicultural Education Reform*

The Legacy Project states that each of their lesson plans "...is based on James Banks's multicultural education model; which approaches teaching by utilizing four progressing levels of exercises and activities predicated on the cognitive retention and analytical capabilities of the students being taught." The organization's lesson plans have divided up the grades as follows:

- Level 1: Contributions Approach
  - Grades K – 2
- Level 2: Additive Approach
  - Grades 3 - 5
- Level 3: Transformational Approach
  - Grades 6 - 8
- Level 4: Social Action Approach
  - Grades 9 - 12

Teach the Gaps and Silences

Another educator strategy that allows for LGBTQ+ integration into existing curriculum is what Learning for Justice calls "teaching the gaps and silences."[14] Queer people have existed in every culture.[15] The erasure of LGBTQ+ events and people from historical accounts, however, is often deliberate. Calling attention to the lack of queer representation and information in history lessons or period-specific literary texts provides an opportunity to contextualize and explain this absence. Learning For Justice suggests the following strategies:

- "For the given era, **explain the laws, culture, power structures and societal values** that may account for the erasure of queer people.

- **Explain why queer people would not have used modern-day identifiers** such as 'gay' or 'transgender' and how this makes it easy for historians to ignore queer identity'

- When possible, **point out the exceptions.** For an LGBTQ+ student who has been made to believe that queerness is an aberration or a 20th century invention, evidence to the contrary is validating. From cave paintings to Ancient Egypt to indigenous American cultures and beyond, queer people have lived and even been celebrated."[16]

Respond to Current Events and Contemporary Issues

History doesn't just exist in textbooks; it is happening in real time. Classroom attention on global LGBTQ+ developments (such as the 2020 U.S. Supreme Court decision that affirmed the protections of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for LGBTQ+ employees or the 2021 repeal of the transgender military ban) create opportunities for students to become informed about the world they inhabit.

It is important to remember that current events may have an emotional impact on students, regardless of whether they are members of the community being discussed. Approaching potentially triggering content through a trauma-informed lens (recognizing symptoms of trauma and adjusting discussion accordingly, encouraging students to lean in/out as needed, following consistent routines, etc.)[17] is key for the health of both individual students and the classroom community.

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[14] Learning for Justice (2018). Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ Students.

[15] Learning for Justice (2021). Queer People Have Always Existed – Teach Like It.

[16] Learning for Justice (2018). Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ Students.

[17] Hanover Research (2019). Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Instruction.

Still, the fact that a topic may be controversial is no reason to avoid its discussion. Learning for Justice suggests the following best practices for classroom discussion surrounding injustice:[18]

- **Set the scene.** Arrange your classroom so all students may see and hear one another. While you may moderate the conversation, encourage students to talk to one another and not through you.

- **Provide context.** Clarify unfamiliar terms and prime students with the background information necessary to effectively participate in discussion.

- **Establish norms.** Whether or not classroom expectations have been communicated at some point during the year, take the time to brainstorm and establish norms for discussion with the whole group. Examples include:
  - "I will listen to understand, not just to respond."
  - "I will challenge ideas, not people."

- **Offer a starting point.** For a discussion about current events, this may be an image or news article. Begin the conversation with a question.

- **Check in with students throughout.** This can be as simple as a thumbs up/down or fist-to-five (ranking comfort level by the number of fingers being held up).

- **Redirect if necessary.** Hateful comments or assumptions rooted in stereotypes should be addressed simply and directly. Pause the conversation, state your reason for doing so in a non-punitive manner, and allow the student the opportunity to reframe their comment.

- **Allow time and space to debrief.** After formally ending the conversation, allow for students to release their thoughts and feelings. This may be through journaling, drawing, or discussion baked into the conversation's closing.

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[18] Learning for Justice (2020). Let's Talk: Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students.

Schoolwide Acknowledgment of Annual Observances

Administrators may provide frameworks for LGBTQ+-centered learning opportunities through the schoolwide acknowledgment of annual queer observances. Often, the organizations endorsing these events provide curricular resources for educators to use. As an administrator, the amplification of both the event and pertinent resources would support educators in integrating discussion/activities into their existing plans.

- **Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31)** calls attention to the contributions by, discrimination against, and overall existence of transgender folks worldwide. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights and the Human Rights Campaign have created a resource geared toward grades 9-12 to assist in celebrating this day.

- **GLSEN Day of Silence (second Friday in April)** encourages LGBTQ+ students and allies to take a day-long vow of silence to call attention to the discrimination and harassment queer students face at school. GLSEN provides information and details how to participate.

- **International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (May 17)** commemorates the date the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from their list of "mental disorders" and brings focus to the violence faced by LGBTQ+ individuals worldwide.[19] The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has created lesson plans and activities for students aged six and up to observe this day.

- **LGBTQ+ Pride Month (June)** celebrates the queer community's history, achievements, and ongoing fight for equity. Educators 4 Social Change has curated articles, lesson plans, and other resources on how to observe Pride Month at school.

- **The anniversary of the Stonewall Riots (June 28)** commemorates the event that is commonly regarded as the start of the movement for queer rights. The Legacy Project has created a lesson plan to allow students to contextualize the riots and how they shaped the LGBTQ+ liberation movement as it is known today.

- **LGBTQ+ History Month (October)**, though similar to Pride Month, was started in 1994 by Missouri high school teacher Rodney Wilson to promote the teaching of queer history.[20] GLSEN has compiled resources to support educators in observing this month.

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[19] IDAHO (2020). What is May 17?

[20] Equality Forum (2021). About LGBT History Month.

- **International Pronouns Day (third Wednesday in October)** "seeks to make respecting, sharing, and educating about personal pronouns commonplace."[21] The [International Pronouns Day website](#) provides resources and ideas on how to encourage participation and promote awareness about pronoun usage.

- **International Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20)** commemorates the loss of transgender folks to anti-trans violence. In honor of the observance, Free to Be Kids has curated a [book list and lesson plans](#) to introduce youth to the concept of gender identity and expression.

- **World AIDS Day (December 1)** intends to spread awareness about the AIDS epidemic and memorialize those that have been lost due to it. The National AIDS Trust in the UK has compiled [resources](#) for educators to use in observance of the holiday.

This list is not exhaustive. GLSEN has created a [calendar](#) for the 2021- 2022 school year featuring a number of other annual LGBTQ+ holidays and observances.

Administrative Support

While not directly delivering LGBTQ+ base instruction, it is key for administrators to have the background knowledge necessary to support their educators as they begin to do so.

- [**Gender Spectrum**](#) provides a variety of resources regarding LGBTQ+-affirming classroom practices/policy recommendations and the rationale for such changes.

- [**Strengthening Inclusion in Illinois Schools**](#), written by Governor JB Pritzker's Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force, offers strategies for mirroring your school's curricular commitment to LGBTQ+ students throughout the school at large.

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[21] International Pronouns Day (2021). Common Questions.

Affirming Learning Environments

"Isn't this topic too mature for younger students?"

"Students realize their gender identity between ages 2–5 and sexual identity between 9–10.[22]"

Implementing an inclusive curriculum is most effective when the learning environment students and school personnel inhabit is affirming to all. Given that young people may realize their gender identity as young as the age of two, creating affirming environments in all youth spaces, no matter the age, is essential to building up their confidence and social and emotional wellbeing. With inspiration from the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance's *Creating Affirming Learning Environments* professional development workshop, this section will help to lay the groundwork for creating a more affirming school. It is critical that not only educators, but school and school district administration, have the background knowledge and best practices to ensure learning environments are affirming for all students and staff.

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[22] APA (2013). Meier, C., & Harris, J. Fact Sheet: Gender Diversity and Transgender Identity in Children.

Personal Belief and Professional Responsibility

Before attempting to transform any learning environment, it is important to first recognize individual beliefs and biases and how they intersect with professional responsibility.

PERSONAL BELIEF

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Understand expectations of work environment	Accept expectations	Recognize "code-switching" might occur between home environment and school environment

The image above communicates the importance of separating one's personal belief from their professional responsibility. In the context of building an inclusive school environment, this separation prioritizes students and their learning experience. This might mean having to evaluate one's own personal beliefs and determine how they manifest themselves in the classroom. Ultimately, an educator's responsibility is to the learning of their students.

Code-switching, or "the modifying of one's behavior, appearance, etc., to adapt to different sociocultural norms,"[23] might have to happen in order to appropriately engage with students. Many professionals conduct their actions and behavior differently at home and work. Similarly, young people in schools often code-switch as a means to participate in the classroom, behaving differently at school than they do at home. This process is often amplified when carrying multiple identities. You can find more information on this in the section titled 'LGBTQ+ Inclusive Frameworks and Learning Strategies. Ultimately, everyone has to participate in the practice of evaluating their own values and determining whether they are meant to enter certain spaces.

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[23] "code-switching." Dictionary.com. Dictionary.com, 2022. Web. 21 January 2022.

The Importance of Language

When thinking about language, focusing on always "saying the right thing" can result in inaction and missed opportunities for learning. Educators, however, have the privilege of maintaining ongoing relationships with students which allows for reflection and revisiting. This means that, if a mistake is made, one can reflect on it and bring it up the next day with a student, opening up a dialogue about the misstep and how to rectify it.
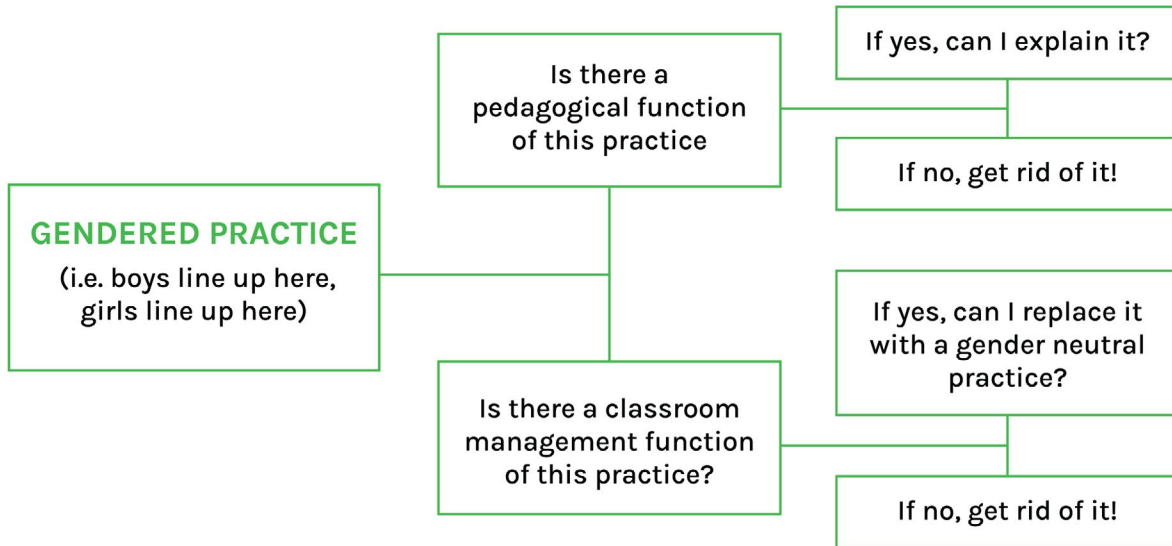
- **Be intentional about the language that is being used.** Is it appropriate? Does it include everyone? Who does it leave behind?

- **Engage students in conversations around the evolution of identity-based language, especially when introducing primary source material.** What identities exist in the room and how do they impact the conversation? What is everyone's connection to LGBTQ+ issues and identities?

- **Be proactive with pronouns.** Create practices, both formal and informal – such as collecting information on forms and in introduction processes) – that allow students to self-identify their name and pronouns. Affirm that people might use different names and/or pronouns in different contexts.

- **Be aware of gendered language.** This takes time, practice, and patience. Setting realistic goals can be a helpful strategy for making changes. For example, for the next three months, try to notice every time someone uses gendered language and work to identify ways to substitute gender neutral language. It doesn't have to happen overnight!

(The image above comes from The Bridges We Burn.)

Gender-Affirming Curricular and Educational Practices

EXAMINE YOUR CURRICULUM FOR GENDERED PRACTICES!

GENDERED PRACTICE
(i.e. boys line up here, girls line up here)

Is there a pedagogical function of this practice
- If yes, can I explain it?
- If no, get rid of it!

Is there a classroom management function of this practice?
- If yes, can I replace it with a gender neutral practice?
- If no, get rid of it!

- **Meet students where they are.** Young people are not a monolith. Educators should focus on the idea that all people have individual likes and dislikes, and exemplify that idea by identifying the differences and similarities between themselves and their students. What feelings arise? Whatever does come up, one must be gentle with themselves and continue to challenge stereotypes and binary thinking with concrete counter-examples.

- **Respect privacy.** No one should inform a parent or guardian of their child's LGBTQ+ identity without the student's consent, given that elements of a student's identity may be site-specific. This means that they may use one name and/or set of pronouns in one place and another in a different place.

- **Create a brave space.** Not only should a young person's resilience and creativity in navigating systemic barriers be affirmed, but showing oneself as a safe person to talk to by having one's practice reflect their knowledge is a great place to start.

Best Practices from the Governor's Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force

In addition to the points made above, here are best practices provided by the Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force to Governor JB Pritzker titled Strengthening Inclusion in Illinois Schools.[24]

- **Provide ongoing training to all staff members.** One of the most common challenges that students, teachers, staff, administrators, and school board members experience when creating affirming environments for transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students is having effective ways to address harmful and/or discriminatory language and actions, especially in the moment. Regular training is an essential part of preventing discrimination and harassment in a school environment and helps ensure the effective and informed implementation of inclusion practices.

- **Create a non-punitive environment that focuses on prevention.** Schools should take a preventive approach to enforcement of anti-bullying policies by focusing on education and positive behavioral interventions and supports rather than exclusionary discipline.

- **Ensure accountability for inclusive practices.** When an employee fails to meet the expectations of the district's policy and procedures, the district should hold the employee accountable and subject the employee to appropriate disciplinary action in a manner that is both effective and prompt. Intentional or persistent refusal to respect a student's gender identity after notification of the student's affirmed name and pronouns should be considered a violation of district policy and/or procedures.

- **Provide easily accessible information and supports.** Districts can benefit from "Know Your Rights" information (see 'Tools and Resources') that is made easily accessible to all students. Districts should consider posting such information in common areas of its schools, such as bathrooms and hallways.

- **Be clear about the complaint procedure.** All stakeholders, especially students, need to be aware of the avenues of support available to them if they have experienced bullying, discrimination, or harassment. Students who are subjected to mistreatment often do not know where to seek help. Districts should ensure that the name and contact information of the appropriate staff are readily accessible.

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[24] Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force (2020). Strengthening Inclusion in Illinois Schools.

Tools and Resources

Getting Started for Educators

Starting something new or altering a practice can be daunting. Luckily, there are a plethora of resources available to help you ease into exercising LGBTQ+-inclusive curricular practices.

- Curated book lists, such as from the American Library Association or Rainbow Library, offer suggestions for youth literature that celebrates queerness.

- Premade lesson plans from the Anti-Defamation League or auxiliary resources from Queer Kid Stuff provide ready-to-go opportunitiesfor Inclusive Curriculum Law implementation.

A full list of resources gathered by the ICACI may be found here.

Self-Education as Entry
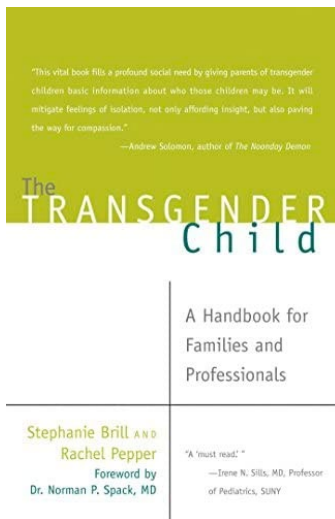
1. *The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals*
   by Stephanie Brill & Rachel Pepper

   Brill and Pepper give concrete information about transgender and gender expansive identities, what it means to affirm transgender and gender expansive young people, and resources for families with transgender children regarding their medical needs and educational experiences.
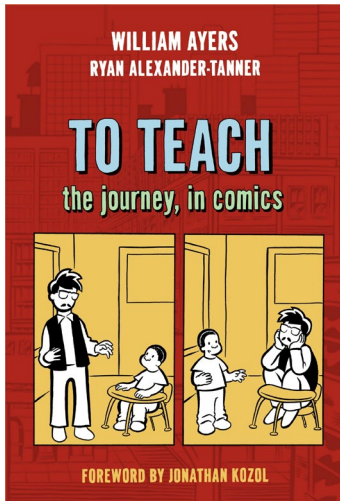
2.   *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher*
**by Bill Ayers**

Ayer's reflections on his experience as a teacher are insightful, poetic, and inspiring. His book is available both in a text version and in a graphic memoir version.
This reminds us about the beauty of teaching, regardless of what a student identifies as.
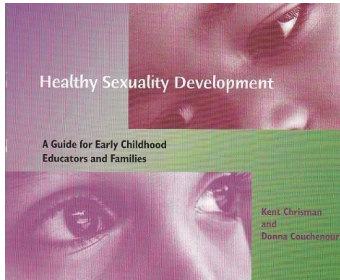
3.   *Healthy Sexuality Development: A Guide for Early Childhood Educators and Families*
by Kent Chrisman & Donna Couchnour

This is an invaluable resource to help frame understanding about the fact that sexuality is a part of every person's development. It offers tips for reducing shame and clearly outlines developmental stages of sexuality development. NAEYC recently published an article, *Understanding Healthy Sexuality Development in Young Children* by Lorena Counterman and Donna Kirkwood that deals with the same topic through the eyes of an early childhood practitioner.[25]
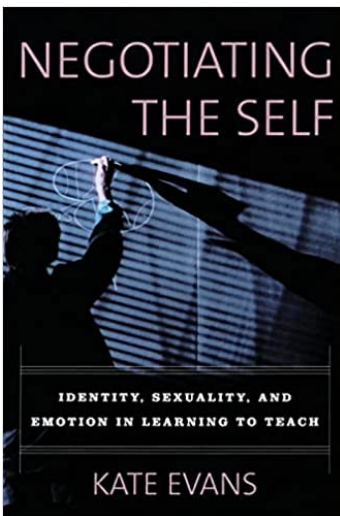
**4.   *Negotiating the Self: Identity, Sexuality, and Emotion in Learning to Teach***
by Kate Evans

Evans helps us think about what role teacher identity can play in a classroom environment. A particularly wonderful book for queer identified educators, it serves as a tool to reflect upon the sometimes slippery road of what it means to be both queer and a teacher. She weaves queer theory in with interviews of four pre-service teachers to craft a book that helps toexamine school climates in relation to homophobia and acceptance.

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[25] Counterman, L., Kirkwood, D. (2013). Understanding Healthy Sexuality Development in Young Children. Voices of Practitioners, 8(2), 1–13.
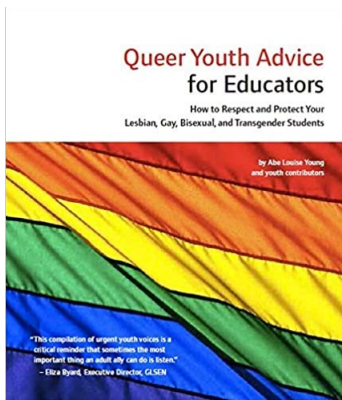
5. *Queer Youth Advice for Educators: How to Respect and Protect Your Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students*
by Abe Louise Young and Youth Contributors

This little manual packs a meaningful punch! Using a combination of statistics and student voices and stories, it addresses the multitude of ways LGBTQ+ students are impacted by hostile school climates, as well as how they are impacted by having a supportive educator.
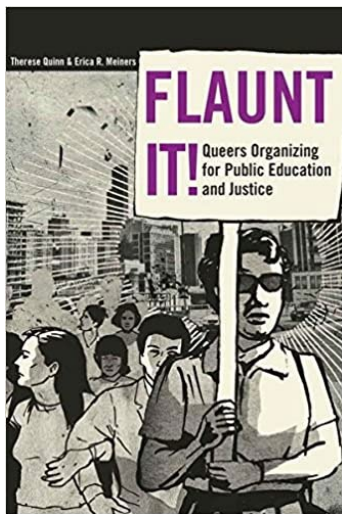
6. *Flaunt It!: Queers Organizing for Public Education and Justice*
by Therese Quinn & Erica R. Meiners

In this critical look at the practice of militarization of public education, Quinn and Meiners take on the 'hidden' curriculum in schools. They urge readers to understand how activism and education are linked and to examine the systemic erasure of queerness and racial identities.
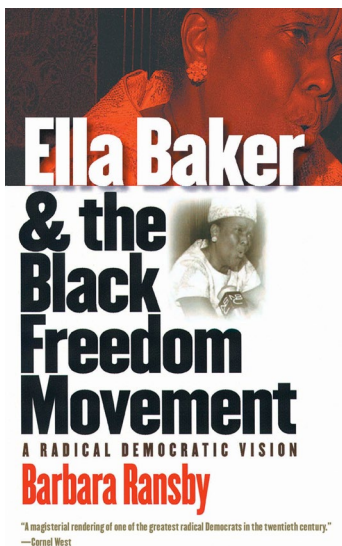
7. *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*
by Barbara Ransby

Ransby's biography of Ella Baker's organizing work within the Civil Rights movement, while not directly about school systems, focuses on Baker's methodology of keeping youth voices central to the movement. Her work with Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is often overshadowed, but was hugely influential and successful. Her strategies inspire thought around teachers' responsibilities to students and the essential role of young people in social movements and change.
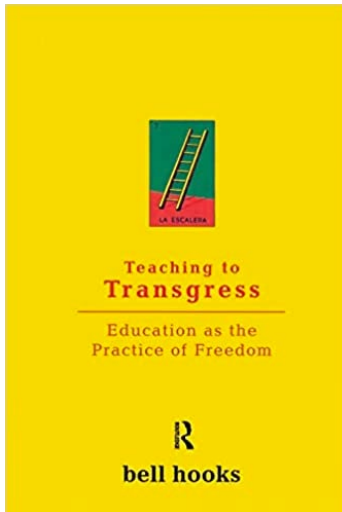
8. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*
   by bell hooks

   Hooks takes the time to remind readers of their highest ideals as teachers, to teach towards freedom. She recognizes all of the humanity that exists within the classroom and reminds teachers of the power that overlapping identities, experiences, and emotions hold as pedagogical tools.
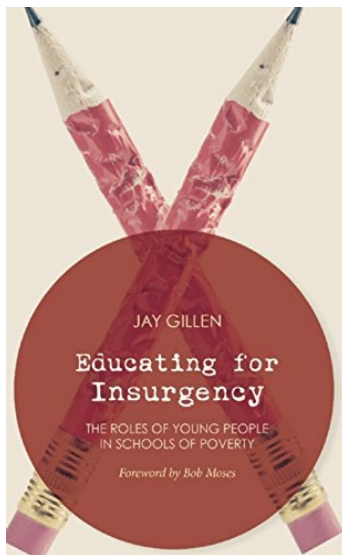
9. *Educating for Insurgency: The Roles of Young People in Schools of Poverty*
   by Jay Gillen

   A teacher in the Baltimore Public School system, Gillen makes clear how central youth experience and voice are to social change movements. Gillen urges adults to listen to what young people are communicating and to understand what is required for political change.
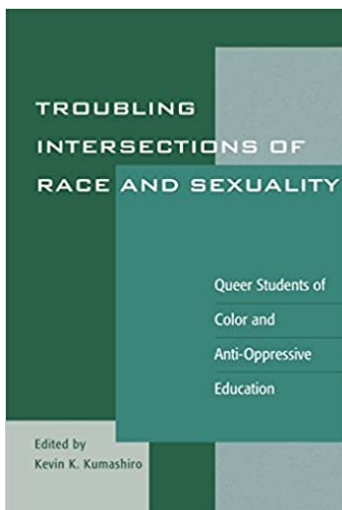
10. *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-Oppressive Education*
    by Kevin K. Kumashiro

    This edited collection features chapters by queer students of color and academics alike. With a refrain about the silences that exist within educational systems for students with intersectional identities, readers are called to examine how common practices erase experiences of queer students of color.

Lesson Plans

There are a myriad of lesson plans available to help create a holistic and inclusive curriculum. A great place to start are the lesson plans from Illinois' own cultural and educational non-profit dedicated to researching and promoting the contributions lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people have made to world history and culture, The Legacy Project.

Professional Development

The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance provides high-quality, accessible professional development for school personnel, social service providers, and government officials. The Alliance's educational workshops and training programs focus on sexual orientation and gender identity within a broader social justice and anti-oppression framework. Alliance staff and volunteers work closely with participants to create specially tailored sessions for each context that are both engaging and educational. To schedule a Professional Development workshop facilitated by the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, please fill out an intake form here.

Workshops include:

- *Supporting Transgender and Gender Expansive Students* is a 90-minute, introductory workshop geared toward youth supporting professionals. It focuses on building a foundational understanding of gender identity and expression and how to support transgender young people.

- *Creating Affirming Learning Environments* is a 90-minute, introductory workshop geared towards classroom teachers and student support staff. It focuses on the experiences and needs of LGBTQ+ young people in school settings. It includes opportunities for reflection, dialogue, and skill building.

- *Legal Rights of Transgender Youth* is a 60-minute overview of the changing legal landscape around transgender students' rights. It is designed to inform schools of the responsibility for serving all students, including transgender and gender expansive students through examining current, relevant legal cases. It includes examples of districts that have implemented effective and affirming Administrative Procedures in Illinois.

- ***Deepening Our History*** is a 60-minute presentation geared towards school administrators and educators that introduces the history, details, value, and impact of the Inclusive Curriculum Law. Participants will understand how affirming learning environments make an inclusive curriculum more effective and analyze the frameworks/strategies for implementing inclusive curricula. This will occur through the exploration of existing tools and resources for classroom use.

These training topics can be adapted in a multitude of ways. The Alliance also customizes workshops to meet the specific needs of districts and schools. More information on professional development through the Alliance can be found here.

Know Your Rights

The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance has launched a five-part English-Spanish bilingual Know Your Rights project dedicated to teaching young people their rights in school. The project educates all students on their rights in specific subject areas, with a focus on LGBTQ+ students' rights.

Organizations, groups, and schools can request a workshop facilitated by an Illinois Safe Schools Alliance staff person or request to have materials shipped to them. Each workshop has a comic that explains students' rights to them, along with a curriculum that helps them facilitate workshops on the topic, step-by-step.

Workshop offerings include Law and Policy, LGBTQ+ Rights in Schools, Organizing and Advocacy, School Discipline, and Sexual Health and Wellness. More information can be found here.

Supporting Documents and Websites

The body of information on building inclusive curricula and fostering affirming school environments is vast and always growing. Numerous organizations, such as The Legacy Project, already have fantastic resources to assist in supporting LGBTQ+ youth in schools. Below are a few great places to start or continue one's journey of learning how to teach an inclusive curriculum, engage in conversations about gender and sexuality, support LGBTQ+ students, and advocate for inclusive school-wide policies and practices.

Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force - In January of 2020, the Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force to Governor JB Pritzker published a report titled Strengthening Inclusion in Illinois Schools which includes strategies and best practices for schools to be inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ+ students.

Gender Spectrum – Gender Spectrum is an organization that works to create gender inclusive spaces for youth. They offer many resources for educators, including a Gender inclusive Schools Framework and strategies for responding to concerns towards teaching youth about gender.

GLSEN – GLSEN is a national organization committed to ensuring students' access to a safe, supportive, and LGBTQ-inclusive K-12 education. They offer many great tools for helping schools create affirming learning environments. Their National School Climate Survey and its Illinois State Snapshot, Safe Space Kit, Model Laws and Policies, Policy Recommendations to Support LGBTQ+ Students, and Developing LGBTQ-Inclusive Classroom Resources are some that are especially helpful.

Learning For Justice – In addition to offering lesson plans, Learning for Justice created a document called Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ Students that contains a book and films list, a list of LGBTQ+ historical figures, a glossary of some commonly used LGBTQ+ terms, and an inclusive school checklist.

For more free and accessible resources for educators, LGBTQ+ students, administrators, school support staff, and parents, please check out this spreadsheet.

Definitions

> "I feel like I don't know enough about the LGBTQ+ community to be 'politically correct.'"

> "Now is your chance to learn! It's less about being 'politically correct' and more about honoring and holding space for all LGBTQ+ identities"

Language and terminology to describe the LGBTQ+ community is constantly changing as understanding about the origins and culture of each group evolves. The terms below reflect the most recent and widely accepted research.

Bisexual

Describes a person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to both men and women, or to more than one sex or gender.

Cisgender

A term used by some to describe people whose sense of gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," and is therefore an antonym of "trans-."

Deadname

Calling a transgender person by their birth name when they have changed their name as part of their gender transition.

Gay

Describes someone who is primarily sexually and/or romantically attracted to members of the same gender. The term most commonly refers to men who are attracted to men, although the term can certainly be used to describe any person of any gender, and may also be used as an umbrella term to refer to the entire LGBTQ+ community.

Gender Expression

External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, transgender people seek to align their gender expression with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender Identity

A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices (see non-binary and/or genderqueer below.) Unlike gender expression (see above), gender identity is not visible to others.

Gender Non-Conforming

A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. Please note that not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender; nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming. Many people have gender expressions that are not entirely conventional – that fact alone does not make them transgender. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as gender non-conforming.

Lesbian

Describes women who are primarily sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women.

LGBT

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. The designation written in Public Act 101-0227 and those who identify as members of the LGBT community.

LGBTQ+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and/or Questioning, and beyond. This is the generally accepted acronym used in popular media and academia. The '+' typically includes, but is not limited to Intersex, Asexual, Allies, and those across the gender and sexuality spectrum. Local organizations may use a variant of this acronym.

Non-Binary and/or Genderqueer

Terms used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as non-binary and/or genderqueer.

Sex or Sex Assigned at Birth

The classification of a person as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy. (This is what is written on the birth certificate.) A person's sex, however, is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

Sexual Orientation

Describes a person's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a straight woman.

Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including transgender. Use the descriptive term preferred by the person. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.

About the Organizations

EQUALITY ILLINOIS

Equality Illinois

As the state's civil rights organization for LGBTQ+ people, **Equality Illinois** envisions a fair and unified Illinois where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where all people live freely regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. To achieve this vision, we advance LGBTQ+ affirming policy initiatives, help LGBTQ+ communities across Illinois build and use power, and work to ensure LGBTQ+ people are represented at governmental tables where decisions are made.

Equality Illinois co-led with the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and Legacy Project the multi-year legislative push for the Inclusive Curriculum Law. Our team worked and strategized with the bill's chief sponsors, State Rep. Anna Moeller and State Sen. Heather Steans; lobbied the members of the Illinois General Assembly to support and pass the legislation; and helped build the broad coalition around the bill. Now, we are supporting the efforts of the Legacy Project and Illinois Safe Schools Alliance to implement the Inclusive Curriculum Law with fidelity. Through our statewide engagement, we can connect parents, educators, and school administrators with the affirming resources and tools developed by the Inclusive Curriculum Advisory Council of Illinois. Furthermore, we are also engaged with partners across the state to combat the current wave of online and in-person anti-LGBTQ+ harassment, intimidation, and violence by anti-equality, anti-family groups and individuals against LGBTQ+ youth, families, teachers, administrators, and elected officials at venues such as school board meetings, Pride festivals, libraries, bakeries, parks, and other pro-equality places of public accommodation.

To learn more about Equality Illinois, visit eqil.org or contact Director of Public Policy Mike Ziri at mziri@eqil.org.

The Legacy Project

The award-winning **Legacy Project** is a Chicago-based cultural and educational non-profit dedicated to researching and promoting the contributions Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) people have made to world history and culture. It is driven by a core of historians, biographers, educators, youth advocates, social activists, and community and business leaders who share a commitment to ending the redaction of LGBTQ+ achievements from shared human history.

The Legacy Project consists of multiple programs, elements, and installations designed to raise awareness of an aspect of history most people do not know is missing:

- "The Legacy Walk" in Chicago (the world's only outdoor LGBTQ+ History museum) is now Chicago's newest Historic Landmark – the largest LGBTQ+ space on earth ever to be granted landmark status. It is visited by nearly 2,000,000 people annually, including students from the surrounding tri-state area who experience the museum as an outdoor classroom.

- "The Legacy Wall" traveling, digitally-interactive exhibit features 125 biographical and photographic elements representing people from every walk of life, who worked in over twenty fields of contribution, from nearly 40 different countries, spanning 4000 years of human history. Over 500,000 people have experienced the Legacy Wall in 40 cities through its on-going national tour.

- The Legacy Project Education Initiative" (free, downloadable and age-appropriate lesson plans, multimedia, study guides, print and digital resource links) was launched in 2013 to provide a tool kit for incorporating LGBTQ+ narratives into existing curriculum. These materials are digitally linked to both the Legacy Walk and the Legacy Wall.

The Legacy Project worked closely with our partners in the Inclusive Curriculum Advisory Council of Illinois to write, lobby for, and pass legislation which mandates the State of Illinois to include 4 LGBTQ contributions and achievements as part of K-12 public school curriculum. Today, the Legacy Project's education materials are now the foundation upon which Illinois's new LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum is built. All of our lesson plans are split into 4-tracks (K-2, G3-5, G6-8, G9-12) and have been extensively analyzed and crafted to align with Illinois's Education Standards.

Our state-of-the-art education database enables teachers to filter their searches by the specific the standard, by school subject, by grade in school, by general demography, and by intersectionality to produced targeted results. All of the Legacy Project's physical installations are digitally linked to work in concert with the education database to create a wrap-around experience that combines live interaction with narration, images, video, classroom exercises, essay challenges, and research resources – all viewable through user's smartphones in real-time. The Walk. The Wall. The Curriculum. In all the world, there is nothing quite like The Legacy Project.

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC)

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) advances health justice and strengthens public health through innovation and partnerships that align people, strategies, and resources. PHIMC tackles critical community health challenges in partnership with public health departments and other government agencies, schools, community-based organizations and advocacy groups, and more. Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) made its home at PHIMC in 2019 and promotes safety, support, and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) youth in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing, and research.

The Alliance can support your efforts in many ways. For example:

Policy and Advocacy:
The Alliance works with schools and school districts to develop and support implementation of affirming school policies and administrative procedures and provides individualized case management to LGBTQ+ youth experiencing discrimination and/or harassment. To request advocacy support, please complete this form.

The Alliance supported the Inclusive Curriculum Law since before it was drafted as legislation in Illinois, by collaborating with stakeholders and developing partnerships statewide, creating tools and resources for school-based communities, and providing direct technical support for educators and administrators seeking to affirm LGBTQ+ students. The Alliance can assist in creating spaces to navigate difficult conversations or ambiguity around the Inclusive Curriculum Law requirements. Professional Development: The Alliance provides professional development workshops for thousands of educators, administrators, student support staff members, and youth workers on how to provide safe and supportive environments for LGBTQ+ youth and how to affirm these identities through everyday practices. Visit this link to learn more about our workshop offerings.

Youth Organizing and Leadership:
The Alliance coordinates the statewide network of Genders and Sexualities Alliances (GSAs). These student-run organizations unite LGBTQ+ and allied youth to build community and organize around issues impacting them in their schools and communities.
Visit this link to learn more about this work.

Learn more about Illinois Safe Schools Alliance at PHIMC here.

Acknowledgements
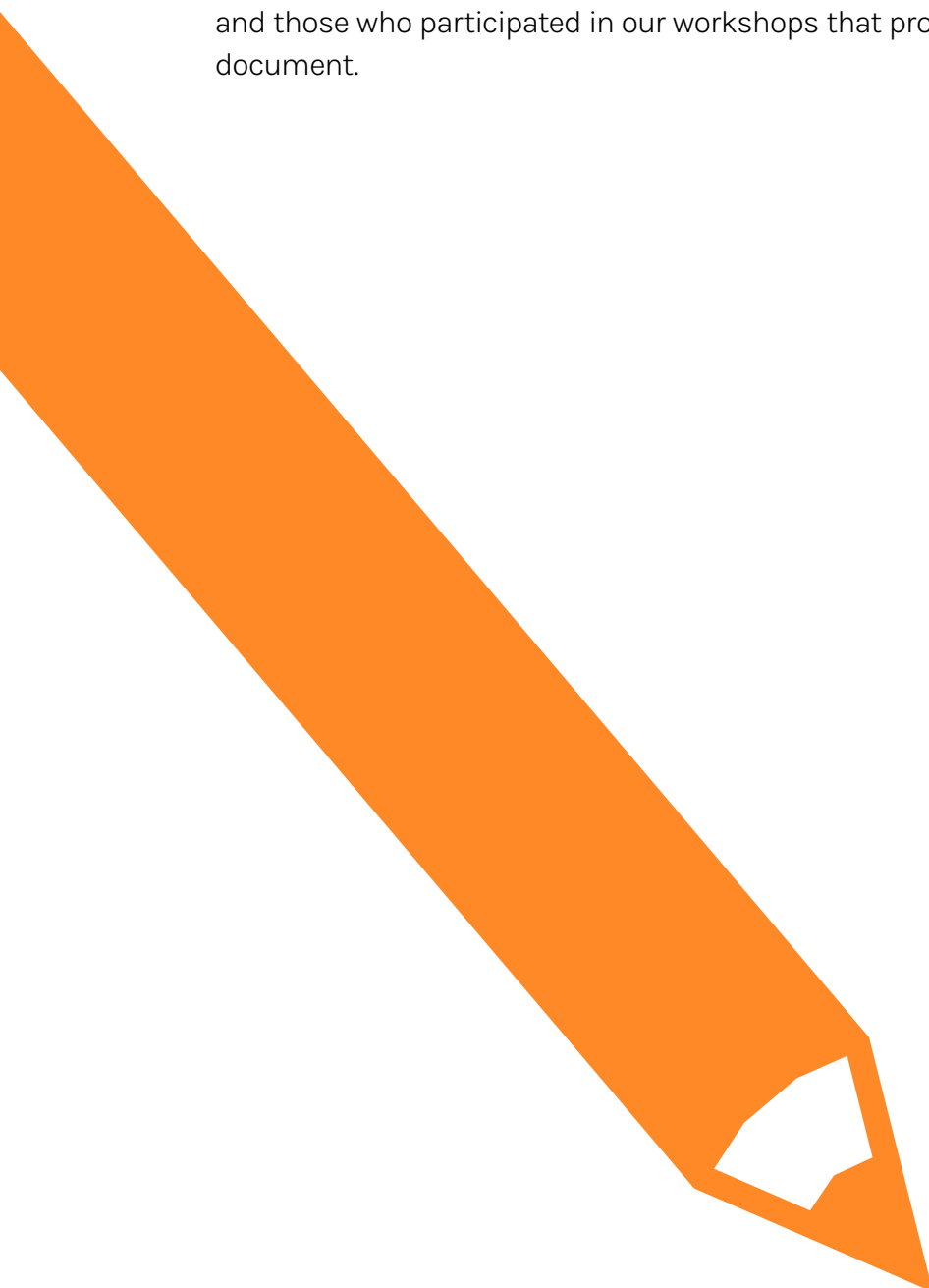
References

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