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**TEACHFORAMERICA**

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## **GLSEN, TEACH FOR AMERICA, AND THE TREVOR PROJECT PARTNER TO CREATE S.A.F.E. CLASSROOMS**

*Groups Ask Teachers Across the Country to Pledge to Make Their Classrooms Safe and Affirming Places for LGBTQ Youth*

**NEW YORK CITY, OCTOBER 11, 2012—** Today, in recognition of National Coming Out Day, the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Teach For America, and The Trevor Project are asking teachers across the country to pledge to make their classrooms Safe and Affirming For Everyone (S.A.F.E.).

The S.A.F.E. initiative seeks to engage educators to prevent bullying and reduce risk by enlisting them as allies in creating safe and affirming classrooms for their students, especially those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). By signing the pledge at [www.safeclassrooms.org](http://www.safeclassrooms.org), teachers will gain access to a library of resources that will help create this embracing environment, including learning objectives, activities, and classroom posters

"Each one of our organizations is committed to ensuring schools are respectful places of learning for every student to succeed," said Dr. Eliza Byard, executive director of GLSEN. "The S.A.F.E. initiative will enable us to equip educators with crucial resources to ensure classrooms are safe for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity."

"There is no path to educational equity that doesn't include all of us assuming responsibility for ensuring our classrooms are safe and affirming places for every student," said Eric Scroggins, executive vice president of growth, development, and partnerships at Teach For America. "This is particularly true of students who identify as or are perceived to be LGBT."

"Studies support that positive changes to school climate can reduce risk for all youth, which is what makes participating in life-affirming programs like S.A.F.E. valuable for educators at all levels," said Abbe Land, executive director and chief executive officer of The Trevor Project. "This collaboration among The Trevor Project, Teach for America, and GLSEN highlights how organizations can work together effectively to improve classroom environments for the benefit of all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity."

According to GLSEN's [2011 National School Climate Survey](#), LGBT students are faced with many obstacles that negatively affect academic performance and personal well-being. Eight out of 10 LGBT youth reported experiencing harassment and three fifths felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation. The [2011 report](#) from the CDC on youth risk behavior indicates that 1 of 6 high school students nationwide has seriously considered attempting suicide, and those who are LGB or questioning are 3 to 4 times more likely to attempt suicide as their straight peers.

Studies also show that it is possible to improve outcomes and reduce risk. An LGBT student who knows about one teacher, school group, counselor, or lifeline they can trust is much more likely to reach out for help in times of crisis. GLSEN's 2011 National School Climate Survey also found that a safer school climate directly relates to the availability of LGBTQ

school-based resources and support, and more positive experiences for students. The presence of school personnel who are supportive of LGBTQ students contributed to higher grade point averages and a greater likelihood of pursuing higher education.

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#### **About GLSEN**

The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established in 1990, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community. For information on GLSEN's research, educational resources, public policy advocacy, student organizing programs and educator training initiatives, visit [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org).

#### **About Teach For America**

Teach For America works in partnership with communities to expand educational opportunity for children facing the challenges of poverty. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding individuals of all academic disciplines to commit two years to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the movement to end educational inequity. Today, more than 10,000 corps members are teaching in 46 urban and rural regions across the country while nearly 28,000 alumni work across sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education. For more information, visit [www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

#### **About The Trevor Project**

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people under 24. Every day, The Trevor Project saves young lives through its free and confidential lifeline and instant messaging services, in-school workshops, educational materials, online resources and advocacy. Honored by the White House as a "Champion of Change," The Trevor Project is a leader and innovator in suicide prevention. Learn more at [TheTrevorProject.org](http://TheTrevorProject.org).

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