

S A F E S C H O O L S

Gay youth are 2-3 times more likely to attempt suicide than other young people. They may comprise up to 30% of (the estimated 5,000) completed youth suicides annually."

(Source: U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, 1989)

Idaho ranks third in the nation for teenage suicide.

(Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, 1997)

46% of GLB youth attempted suicide in the past year, 22.2% skipped school in the past month because they felt unsafe, and 23.5% were in a fight that resulted in receiving medical attention. (Source: The Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Study, 1997)

97% of public high school students report

regularly hearing homophobic remarks from their peers; 53% hear these negative or hateful remarks from school staff. (Source: Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay & Lesbian Youth, 1993)

Teachers who hear anti-gay epithets fail to respond 97% of the time. (Source: GLSEN website, from a study conducted in Des Moines, Iowa)

Due to the fact that accurate information about homosexuality is largely ignored or censored and homophobia goes uninterrupted, gay students are encouraged to feel that they are "sick" or "different". Research and mental health professionals say that Gay and Lesbian students are not sick. Students need to have access to accurate information and schools need to protect students who are the victims of homophobic violence.

Homosexuality is no longer defined as a mental illness! "Professional organizations representing more than 477,000 health and mental health professionals have all taken the position that homosexuality is not a mental disorder and thus there is no need for a "cure".

(Source: Just the Facts About Sexual Orientation & Youth: A Primer for Principals, Educators & School Personnel)

School Districts in other states have faced and actually lost lawsuits for their failure to set & enforce policies that protect gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth.

When students in Idaho no longer face anti-gay harassment, but instead are educated in an environment that promotes respect and understanding for ALL people, then homophobic violence and the problems gay and lesbian youth face will decrease!

Please, as law makers, work to make Idaho safer for ALL students!