

Research Brief: School Experiences and Outcomes Among Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender-Expansive Young People

Across two national survey samples, transgender, nonbinary, and gender-expansive students reported harmful school policies or practices as well as meaningful sources of support: 56% reported attending a school with at least one discriminatory policy, while 97% said they had at least one supportive educator at their school.

August 2026

Key Findings

- Transgender, nonbinary, and gender-expansive (TGE) students who reported discriminatory school policies or experienced negative events at school missed more days in the school year; **nearly a third of TGE students (32%) missed at least one day of school in the last month due to safety concerns.**
- TGE students who had more supportive educators, were more connected to other LGBTQ+ students, and had positive depictions of LGBTQ+ people, issues, or topics in at least one class had **higher estimated GPAs** than those with fewer supportive educators, less connection to other LGBTQ+ students, and no positive depictions of LGBTQ+ people, issues, or topics in school.
- TGE students reported high levels of activism, with over half (51%) having led at least one activism activity; **the majority of TGE students of color (75%) had participated in or led activism activities.**
- TGE students reported several ways that teachers and other staff have supported LGBTQ+ students at their school, with behaviors ranging from **asking about and respecting pronouns** to **providing assistance with name changes.**

Background

Transgender, nonbinary, and gender-expansive (TGE) students continue to navigate school environments that can profoundly shape their sense of safety, belonging, attendance, academic engagement, and well-being. Research has consistently found that school climate matters for transgender and nonbinary students: gender affirmation, supportive educators and peers, inclusive policies, and access to affirming school spaces are associated with **greater well-being and school belonging**. Conversely, misgendering, harassment, exclusion from gendered spaces, and discriminatory policies are associated with **poorer mental health, lower connectedness, and school avoidance**.^{1,2}

Schools can also serve as critical sites of support, connection, and affirmation, particularly when students have access to supportive educators, LGBTQ+-affirming curricula, inclusive policies, Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs), and meaningful relationships with LGBTQ+ peers. Recent studies show that LGBTQ+-inclusive school policies and practices, as well as supportive GSA experiences, **predict higher school belonging** among LGBTQ+ youth, including transgender and nonbinary students.³ At the same time, discriminatory policies and negative school experiences **can undermine students' well-being and ability to fully participate in school**. Research on absenteeism among transgender high school students of color finds that victimization, cyberbullying, depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and school connectedness are associated with absenteeism related to mental health concerns and harassment.⁴

Building on this existing evidence, this brief brings together findings from two complementary data sources to better understand the school experiences of TGE students in the United States: [The Trevor Project's 2025 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People](#) and [Glisten's 2025 National School Climate Survey](#). By considering these data together, the brief highlights both the persistent challenges TGE students face in school and the conditions that help schools better support belonging, attendance, academic engagement, and well-being. In doing so, this brief offers a timely, student-centered synthesis of what affirming school environments can look like in practice and why they remain urgently needed.

Results

THE TREVOR PROJECT

The Trevor Project's 2025 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People included 3,758 TGE young people (median age = 16 years old) enrolled in either middle school (17%), high school (78%), or a dual enrollment program (5%); the majority of these students (85%) attended a public school.

Discriminatory school policies and practices

Over half (56%) of TGE students reported that their school had at least one policy or practice that was discriminatory towards LGBTQ+ students. The most commonly reported policy or practice was being prohibited from using a bathroom that aligned with their gender (41%). TGE students also reported being prohibited from using a locker room that aligned with their gender at nearly the same rate (38%); one-third (33%) of TGE students reported being unable to play on a sports team that aligned with their gender. Other discriminatory policies and practices included being prevented from using chosen name and pronouns at school (27%), being disciplined for public affection that would not have resulted in discipline for cisgender or heterosexual students (18%), being prevented from wearing clothes that were seen as inappropriate for their gender (18%), and being prevented from writing about or discussing LGBTQ+ topics in class assignments or extracurricular activities (17%).

Negative experiences at school

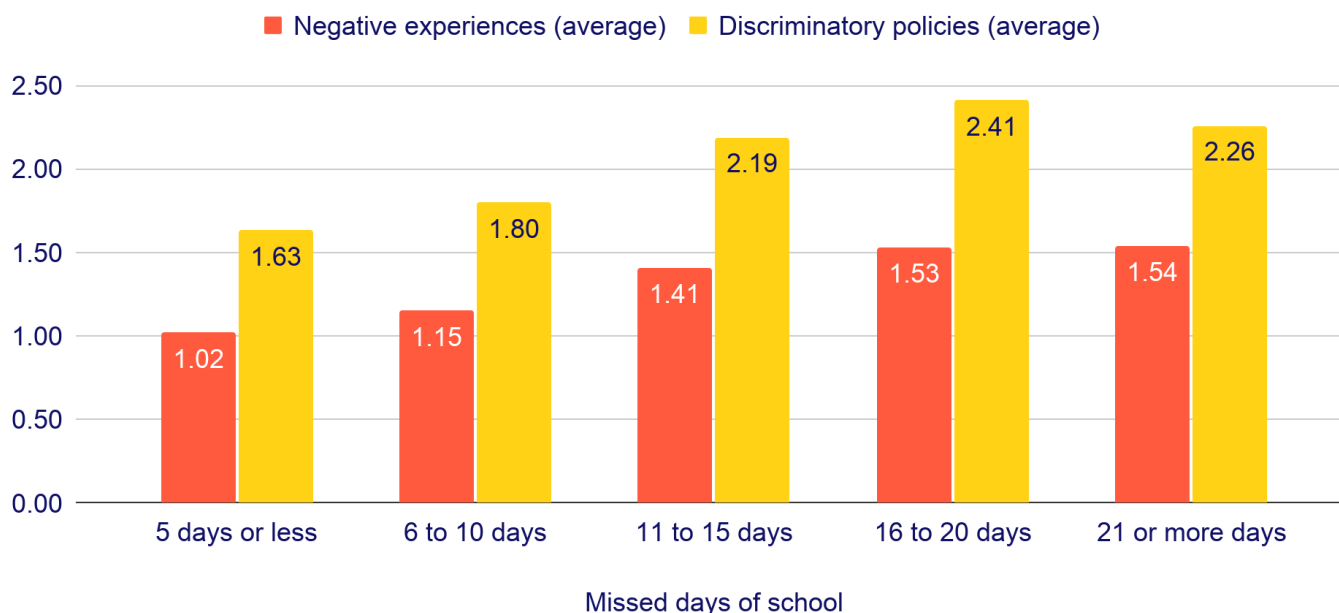
Most TGE students (61%) reported experiencing at least one negative event at school in the past 12 months. The most common negative event was verbal harassment related to being LGBTQ+ (49%). Over a quarter (27%) of TGE students were not allowed to dress in a way that fit their gender identity or expression. Others reported being disciplined for fighting back against bullies (16%) or being disciplined more harshly by teachers or staff because they were LGBTQ+ (12%). Nearly 1 in 10 TGE students (9%) reported being mistreated so badly that they left their school.

School attendance

Most TGE students reported regular school attendance, with the majority (60%) missing 10 or fewer days of school in the 2024-2025 school year; a smaller number (15%) missed 11 to 15 days. **However, 25% of TGE students reported missing 16 or more days of school (i.e., chronic absenteeism) in the school year.**

Discriminatory Policies, Negative Experiences, and School Attendance Among TGE Students

Discriminatory policies and negative experiences were associated with more missed days of school.



TGE students who did not report any discriminatory policies or practices were less likely to be chronically absent than those who did (adjusted odds ratio [aOR] = 0.77, 95% CI: 0.64 – 0.93, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, TGE students who did not report any adverse experiences at school were 32% less likely to be chronically absent (aOR = 0.68, 95% CI: 0.57 – 0.82, $p < 0.01$).



Glisten's 2025 National School Climate Survey included 1,915 transgender, nonbinary, and gender-expansive (TGE) middle and high school students who attended grades 6 through 12 (median age = 16 years old) during the 2023-2024 school year. The majority of these students (75%) attended a public school. 649 of TGE respondents were BIPOC (i.e., Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, including biracial and multiracial students).

School environment and policies

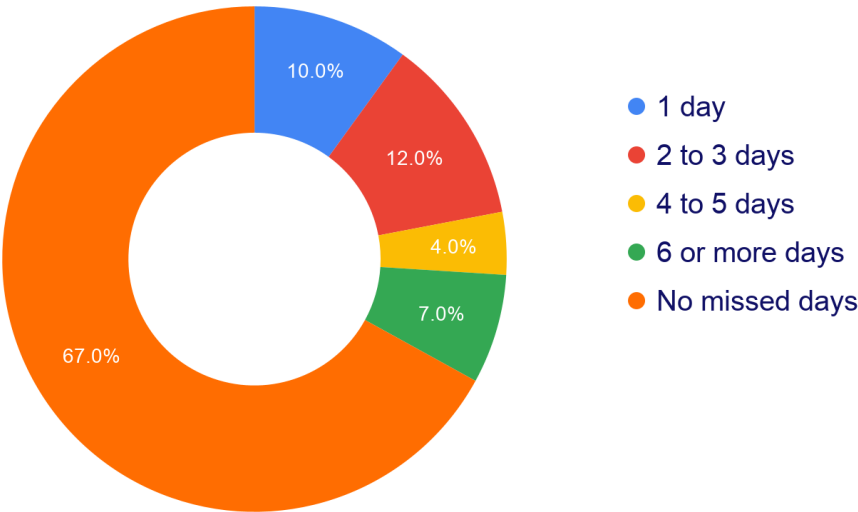
TGE students reported a high degree of peer connection to LGBTQ+ students in their school, with 43% reporting being somewhat connected and 31% reporting being very connected to other LGBTQ+ students. **Nearly all TGE students (97%) reported having at least one supportive educator at their school**,

although less than a third (30%) reported having positive depictions of LGBTQ+ people, issues, or topics in at least one of their classes. When asked whether their school or district had policies supportive of TGE students, 20% reported that such policies were in place, 41% reported that there were not, and the remainder said they were unsure.

Although most TGE students felt somewhat safe (41%) or very safe (13%) at school, a notable percentage reported feeling somewhat unsafe (23%) or very unsafe (5%). Nearly three-quarters (74%) of BIPOC TGE students felt unsafe due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or their race/ethnicity. Most (80%) BIPOC TGE students reported being harassed and/or assaulted due to their race or ethnicity or sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. Over a quarter of TGE students either rarely looked forward to school (24%) or never looked forward to school (7%). Nearly a third (32%) of TGE students reported missing one or more days of school in the last 30 days due to safety concerns at or on the way to school (10% missed 1 day, 12% missed 2 to 3 days, 4% missed 4 to 5 days, and 7% missed 6 or more days).

Missed Days of School Due to Safety Concerns Among TGE Students in the Past Month

Nearly a third of TGE students missed at least one day of school in the last month due to safety concerns.



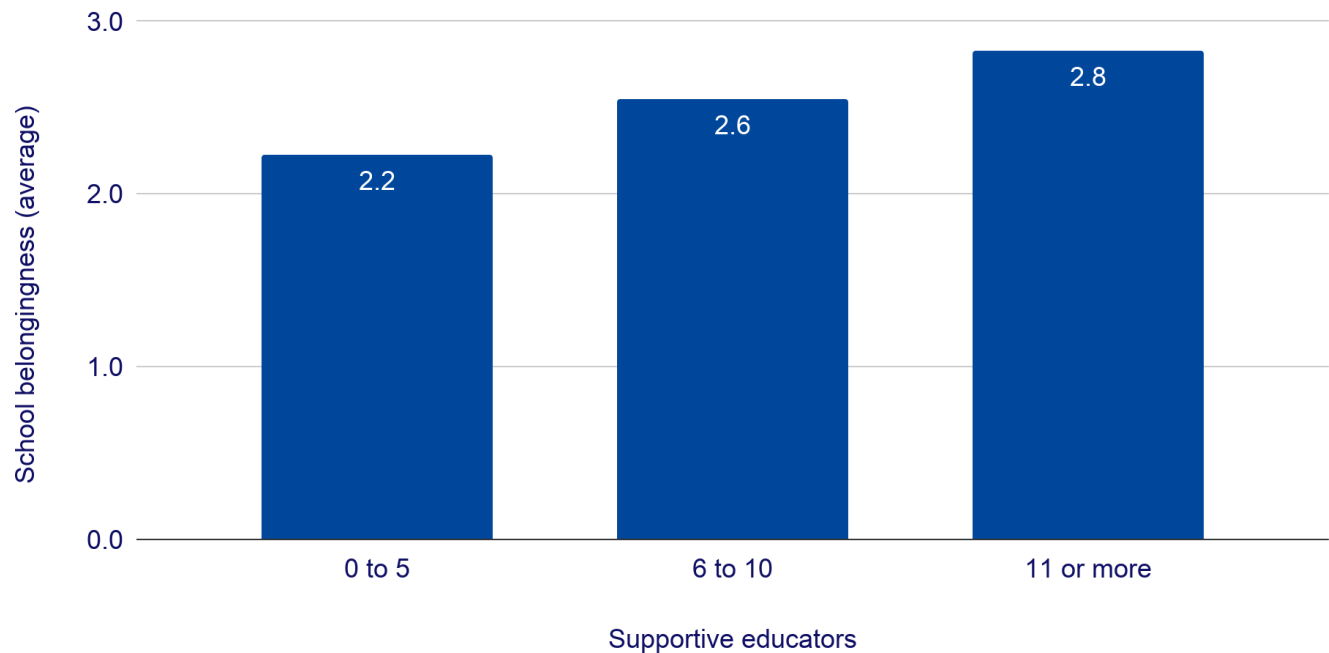
School belonging

School belonging was assessed using an average score between 1 to 4, with higher scores indicative of students feeling more belonging at their school. The average belonging score for this sample of TGE students was 2.58 (SD = 0.57).

Having more supportive educators was related to higher levels of school belonging, even after controlling for age and BIPOC identity. Having 11 or more supportive educators was associated with greater school belonging compared to having 6 to 10 supportive educators ($B = 0.28$, 95% CI: 0.21 - 0.34, $p < .001$) or 0 to 5 supportive educators ($B = 0.58$, 95% CI: 0.52 - 0.64, $p < .001$). Students who had 6 to 10 supportive educators also had greater school belonging compared to those with 0 to 5 supportive educators ($B = 0.30$, 95% CI: 0.23 - 0.37, $p < .001$).

Supportive Educators and School Belongingness

Having more supportive educators was related to a higher sense of school belongingness.



School belonging was also related to whether TGE students had supportive policies at their schools. Those who either reported not having supportive policies or were unsure had lower average school belonging scores than those who reported their school or district having supportive policies (2.83 vs. 2.37); this association held after controlling for age and BIPOC identity ($B = 0.46$, 95% CI: 0.38 - 0.53, $p < .001$).

Students with positive depictions of LGBTQ+ people in at least one class reported higher school belonging than those with none (2.86 vs. 2.46); this association remained after controlling for age and BIPOC identity ($B = 0.39$, 95% CI: 0.33 - 0.45, $p < .001$). Additionally, students who had greater connection to LGBTQ+ students in their school also had greater school belonging. Students who did not know other LGBTQ+

students or reported having no or little connection had an average school belonging score of 2.25. However, those who reported being somewhat connected or very connected to other LGBTQ+ students had average school belonging scores of 2.60 and 2.82, respectively. Being very connected to LGBTQ+ peers at school was associated with greater belonging compared to being somewhat connected ($B = 0.24$, 95% CI: 0.17 - 0.30, $p < .001$) or having no or little connection ($B = 0.58$, 95% CI: 0.51 - 0.65, $p < .001$).

Estimated GPA

The average estimated student GPA for this sample of students was 3.33 (SD = 0.82).

Having more supportive educators was related to higher estimated GPAs. Students with 0 to 5 supportive educators, 6 to 10 supportive educators, and 11 or more supportive educators had estimated GPAs of 3.20, 3.31, and 3.42, respectively. After controlling for age and BIPOC identity, those with 11 or more supportive educators had higher estimated GPAs than those with 0 to 5 supportive educators (95% CI: 0.08 - 0.23).

Students with positive depictions of LGBTQ+ people, issues, or topics in at least one class had higher estimated GPAs than those with none (3.42 vs. 3.29), and this difference remained significant after controlling for age and BIPOC identity (95% CI: 0.06 - 0.20). Relatedly, students who had greater connection to LGBTQ+ students in their school also had higher estimated GPAs. Students who did not know other LGBTQ+ students or reported having no or little connection had an average estimated GPA of 3.23. By comparison, those who reported being somewhat connected or very connected to other LGBTQ+ students reported estimated GPAs of 3.33 and 3.42, respectively. The difference between the lowest and highest level of LGBTQ+ connectedness remained after controlling for age and BIPOC identity (95% CI: 0.05 - 0.21).

Student Activism

TGE students reported high levels of advocacy and activism. **Over half (51%) of TGE students in the sample had led at least one activism activity.** Additionally, a majority (75%) of BIPOC TGE students participated in and/or led activities that included: organizing an event or campaign about LGBTQ+ issues, speaking at a local school board meeting or another public hearing, or serving as a youth member of school board, task force, committee or other policy making or advisory group.

Qualitative findings

The Trevor Project and Glisten both gave survey respondents the opportunity to tell us about their experiences in school. Glisten also conducted focus groups with Black, Latine, Asian, intersex, transfemme youth, as well as students with disabilities, students attending school in rural areas, and students attending school in the South. Here's some of what we learned, and what they told us in their own words.

What do students look forward to in the school year?

- Seeing or being with friends – especially LGBTQ+ friends.
- Talking with or going to class with supportive, accepting, and passionate teachers.
- Learning.
- Going to specific classes – particularly ones in which they feel safe, are about subjects of personal interest, or that they have friends in.
- Having a place to be away from home - particularly somewhere that is more accepting and safe.
- Extracurriculars, including GSAs.
- Connecting with other LGBTQ+ students through supportive online platforms.
- Experiencing identity affirmation - such as having correct pronouns and name used.

How have teachers or other staff shown their support of LGBTQ+ students at your school?

- Asking about, providing, respecting, and affirming pronouns and names.
- Having physical or visual displays, such as Safe Space Stickers or Pride flags.
 - However, several students also mentioned that this was not enough without showing support in other ways.
- Vocally supporting LGBTQ+ topics and individuals. This included teaching and talking about LGBTQ+ topics in class and having LGBTQ+ books available.
- Being involved with the GSA.
- Being openly allied with LGBTQ+ students or LGBTQ+ themselves.
- Addressing and not tolerating anti-LGBTQ+ behaviors, including disciplining anti-LGBTQ+ language and supporting anti-bullying efforts.
- Making students feel accepted, respected, not judged, and normal.
- Providing emotional support.
- Providing systems-related support, such as helping with name changes or accessing bathrooms.
- Advocating for the creation of Safe Zones.



Illustrative quotes

- “More LGBTQ+ resources at school, maybe clubs and more learning about how being LGBTQ+ can impact you, like peer pressure or how to get help.”
-13 year old transgender male respondent from Nevada, Trevor US National Survey
- “Later in the year, a younger student came out to me as questioning their gender. They told me that seeing me just being myself, even on tough days, helped them feel less alone. The moment really stuck with me. Sometimes I feel like I’m fighting invisible battles every day, but knowing that just living authentically can open the door for someone else, that made everything feel worth it. It reminded me that visibility is not just brave, it’s transformative.”
-18-year-old (12th grade) transfemme focus group participant in Georgia, Glisten
- “For me, what made me feel safe, I guess, is my friends, how they stand up for me.”
-16-year-old (10th grade) transgender male, disabled focus group participant in New Jersey, Glisten
- “I didn’t really have a group of people that I could really hang out with that understood the queer experience like I did. When I started finding other queer people that were like me, and had experienced the same things I had at school this year, it was very welcoming. It was a different vibe. I found out a lot of other things about myself relating to sexuality and gender this year because of my queer friends.”
-14-year-old (9th grade) trans-masculine, Black focus group participant in Texas, Glisten
- “More discussions of LGBTQ+ topics earlier in school and support for those kids (at least that’s what I wish I’d had)”
-21-year-old (former student) nonbinary respondent from Texas, Trevor US National Survey

Looking Ahead

The findings in this brief underscore that TGE students' school experiences are not only shaped by individual relationships, but also by the policies, practices, and climates that determine whether students are recognized, protected, and able to participate fully in school. Across the data sources examined here, students described both the harms of discriminatory and unsupportive environments and the **protective role of affirming educators, inclusive policies, LGBTQ+ peer connection, and positive representation.**

Schools and districts can better support TGE students by adopting policies and everyday practices that **affirm students' names, pronouns, gender expression, and access to facilities and activities that align with their gender.** These supports directly respond to the discriminatory policies and negative experiences reported by TGE students in this brief, including restrictions on gender-aligned facilities or activities, barriers to using chosen names or pronouns, and anti-LGBTQ+ harassment. Research on chosen-name use among transgender youth further suggests that being able to use one's chosen name across contexts, including school, is associated with lower depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior.^{5,6}

Training educators and staff to recognize and respond to anti-LGBTQ+ harassment, creating and sustaining GSAs, and incorporating positive representations of LGBTQ+ people into classroom learning can also help create environments where TGE students **feel safer, more connected, and more able to participate fully in school.** These recommendations align with this brief's findings that **supportive educators, supportive policies, positive depictions of LGBTQ+ people, and connection to LGBTQ+ peers** are associated with greater school belonging and, in some cases, higher estimated GPA. They are also consistent with broader research identifying school staff, peers, curriculum, GSAs, policies, and school climate as interconnected supports associated with positive outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth.^{7,8}

As schools and districts review policies and practices that affect TGE students, it is critical that **students' voices remain central** to decisions that affect their education and well-being. Young people across the country have led a variety of campaigns and initiatives in schools, including efforts to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and to protect students and families from ICE raids.^{9,10} The findings in this brief show that TGE students are also actively engaged in advocacy, with many participating in or leading efforts related to LGBTQ+ issues and school policy. The qualitative findings in this brief further show that students know what helps them feel safe and supported: affirming teachers, accepting peers, inclusive spaces, and the ability to be recognized as who they are. Looking ahead, efforts to improve school climate should prioritize both reducing harmful and discriminatory experiences and expanding the affirming supports that help TGE students belong, participate fully, and succeed.

The Trevor Project is committed to supporting LGBTQ+ young people's access to supportive school environments and good health through crisis intervention, education, and peer support initiatives. Our free, 24/7 crisis services are committed to making sure that all LGBTQ+ young people receive high-quality crisis care that addresses the unique challenges they face. Our education team equips school professionals with the tools needed to support LGBTQ+ youth across diverse identities and experiences. Our TrevorSpace platform is a safe and supportive online space for LGBTQ+ young people to connect with peers, find support in a moderated community, and share experiences related to mental health in a safe environment.

You can read more research from The Trevor Project that explores the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people in school, such as [Anti-Bullying Policies in School and LGBTQ+ Young People](#) and [School-Related Protective Factors for LGBTQ Middle and High School Students](#). Additionally, The Trevor Project provides resources for both LGBTQ+ young people and their allies, such as [Creating Safer Spaces in Schools for LGBTQ+ Young People](#).

Glisten is dedicated to creating safe and respectful learning environments for youth of all sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, race and abilities. Glisten's work is formed upon four pillars. (1) *Comprehensive Policies*: Glisten's national and local public policy work advocates for policies that guarantee youth's right to quality and equitable education. (2) *Supportive Educators*: Educators play a vital role in protecting LGBTQ+ youth from harassment and implementing an inclusive learning environment. (3) *Youth Engagement*: From student-led clubs, to organizing community events, when youth lead the way, real change happens. (4) *Inclusive Learning*: LGBTQ+ inclusive instructional materials, LGBTQ+ inclusive school libraries, the ability to access information about LGBTQ+ topics via school internet and inclusive sex education provide students access to affirming representations of LGBTQ+ people and other marginalized communities. When these are in place, LGBTQ+ youth experience less harassment and discrimination and do better in school. [For more information, visit Glisten.](#)

Methods



Sample

Data were collected through The Trevor Project's [2025 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People](#). In total, 16,667 LGBTQ+ young people between the ages of 13 and 24 were recruited via targeted ads on social media, posts from various LGBTQ+ "influencers," state and national organizations that serve LGBTQ+ young people, and The Trevor Project's direct outreach efforts (e.g., e-mail listservs). This brief features data from 3,758 TGE young people who reported being enrolled in either middle school, high school, or a dual enrollment program.

Measures

Demographics (i.e., age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity) were collected by asking participants to select a single category from a provided list.¹¹

School policies and practices were assessed with a list of 13 items based on Glisten's 2021 National School Climate Survey. The list included items such as being "prevented from using your chosen name and pronouns," and "prevented from playing on the sports team that is consistent with your gender."¹² For each item, participants were asked "Whether or not you have experienced each policy/practice at your school" and they could indicate either "No," "Yes," "Does not apply to me," or "Decline to answer." The latter two options were coded as missing, and a total index of policies and practices was created by summing the remaining items.

Negative events at school were assessed with a list of seven items based on the Advocates for Trans Equality's 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey.¹³ The list included items such as, "I wasn't allowed to dress in the way that fit my gender identity or expression," and "I believe I was disciplined more harshly because teachers/staff thought I was LGBTQ+." For each item participants were asked if any of these things happened to them in school by classmates, teachers, or school staff. They could indicate either "No," "Yes," or "Decline to answer." The last option was coded as missing, and a total index of negative events was created by summing the remaining items.

School attendance was assessed with one item: "About how many days of school have you missed during the 2024-2025 school year?" Response options included "5 days or less," "6 to 10 days," "11 to 15 days," "16 to 20 days," and "More than 20 days." Those who indicated they missed 16 or more days were considered to have levels of attendance consistent with chronic absenteeism.

Qualitative responses were identified from an optional open-ended question: “What kinds of support or resources would be most helpful for you as an LGBTQ+ young person?” Responses were minimally edited for brevity and clarity.

Analysis

Chi-square tests were run to examine differences between groups. Logistic regression models controlled for age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and U.S. census region. Unless otherwise noted, all analyses are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, meaning documented differences would be expected less than 5% of the time if there were no true difference in the population (i.e., under the null hypothesis).



Sample

Data were collected through [Glisten's 2025 National School Climate Survey](#). The final sample included 2,800 LGBTQ+ students. Recruitment methods included word of mouth, the Glisten Educators Network, Chapter Network, National Student Council, social media ads and influencers, as well as other national, state and local organizations who work with youth. This brief features data from 1,915 transgender, nonbinary, and gender-expansive (TGE) students who were at least 13 years old and reported being in middle school or high school during the 2023 - 2024 school year.

Measures

School safety was assessed with a single item: “Overall, how safe or unsafe did you feel at school or in classes during the 2023-2024 school year?” Response options included “very unsafe,” “somewhat unsafe,” “neither safe nor unsafe,” “somewhat safe,” and “very safe.” Safety in regards to race or ethnicity and sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression was assessed with a single multiple-response item: “In the 2023-2024 school year, did you feel unsafe at your school because of... (Please select all that apply to you)”. Response options included “your sexual orientation,” “your gender,” “how you express your gender,” “your race or ethnicity or because people think you are of a certain race or ethnicity” among other identities. How much students looked forward to school was assessed with an item, “How often, if ever, did you look forward to school or classes in the 2023-2024 school year?” with response options including “never,” “rarely,” “sometimes,” “often,” and “frequently.” The number of days of school missed due to safety concerns was assessed with an item, “During the past month of school, on how many days did you not go to school because you felt you would be unsafe at school or on your way to or from school?” Response items included “0 days,” “1 day,” “2 or 3 days,” “4 or 5 days”, and “6 or more days.”

Student advocacy was assessed with a single item: “During the past 12 months, have you done any of the following? (Please select all that apply)” Response options included “participated in a direct action against injustice (such as walkouts, protests, or boycotts)”, “led a direct action against injustice (such as walkouts, protests, or boycotts), among other activities. Responses were combined based on the content of each choice into three categories: led at least one activity, participated in at least one activity, and did not lead or participate in any activities.

School belongingness was assessed with a modified version of the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale,¹⁴ and average scores were from 1 to 4. The number of supportive educators at school was assessed by asking, “How many teachers or other school staff persons are supportive of LGBTQIA2S+ students at your school?” Response options included “0”, “1”, “2”, “3”, “4”, “5”, “Between 6 and 10”, “More than 10.” The presence of school policies supportive of TGE students was assessed by asking, “Does your school or district have official policies or guidelines to support transgender and/or nonbinary students?” Response options included, “no,” “yes,” and “not sure.” Positive depictions of LGBTQ+ in school was assessed with the items, “In the 2023-2024 school year, were you taught positive things about LGBTQIA2S+ people, history, events, or topics in any of your classes?” and “In the 2023-2024 school year, were you taught negative things about LGBTQIA2S+ people, history, events, or topics in any of your classes?” Responses were combined into two categories: having positive LGBTQ+ depictions in at least one class, and having positive LGBTQ+ depictions in no classes. Connection to other LGBTQ+ students at school was assessed by asking participants, “To what extent, if at all, did you feel connected with other LGBTQIA2S+ students at your school during the 2023-2024 school year?” Response options included not knowing other LGBTQ+ students, “not at all connected,” “not very connected,” “somewhat connected,” and “very connected.” Estimated GPA was assessed by asking, “During the past school year (2023-2024), how would you describe the grades you received in school?” GPA values were assigned such that mostly A’s was a 4.0, mostly A’s & B’s a 3.5, etc.

Qualitative data was generated through two different survey open-ended questions: “What about school or classes did you look forward to in the 2023-2024 school year?” and “How have teachers or other staff persons shown that they are supportive of LGBTQIA2S+ students at your school during the 2023-2024 school year?” Additional data (i.e., illustrative quotes) came from focus groups conducted in June and July 2025 about the 2024-2025 school year. Quotes were minimally edited for brevity and clarity.

Analysis

Differences between groups were assessed with linear and logistic regression models, controlling for age and BIPOC identity.

Data Tables

Participant characteristics of TGE students in The Trevor Project’s 2025 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People

	TGE students (n = 3,758)
Age, Mean (SD)	15.46 (1.49)
Sexual orientation	
Gay	12.3%
Lesbian	14.4%
Bisexual	19.7%
Queer	14.1%
Pansexual	19.2%
Asexual	13.7%
Heterosexual	2.5%
Not Sure	4.0%

Gender identity	
Transgender boy/man	32.2%
Transgender girl/woman	13.6%
Nonbinary	46.3%
Gender questioning	7.9%
Race / ethnicity	
Asian American / Pacific Islander	4.6%
Black / African American	3.3%
Hispanic / Latinx	8.0%
Middle Eastern / Northern African	0.6%
Native / Indigenous	0.8%
More than one race / ethnicity	19.2%
White	63.5%
Socioeconomic status	
More than meets basic needs	84.3%
Just meets basic needs or less	15.7%

Region	
Midwest	23.0%
Northeast	16.4%
South	33.4%
West	27.2%
Urbanicity	
Large city	13.6%
Just outside of a large city	38.2%
Small city or town	38.7%
Rural area	9.5%

Participant characteristics of TGE students in Glisten's 2025 National School Climate Survey

	TGE students (n = 1,915)
Age, Mean (SD)	15.55 (1.64)
Gender identity	
Boy or man	32.6%
Girl or woman	7.2%
Nonbinary or genderqueer	40.2%
Gender questioning	18.4%
Another gender identity not listed	18.4%
Race / ethnicity	
Asian American	
•East Asian	5.3%
•Southeast Asian	2.6%
•South Asian	2.2%

Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and / or Pasifika	0.9%
Black and / or African descent	7.0%
Hispanic / Latinx	13.7%
Arab American, SWANA, Middle Eastern, or Northern African	1.3%
Native American, American Indian, or Alaska Native	5.1%
Indigenous Mexican, Central American, or South American	1.9%
White	66.1%
A race or ethnicity not listed	1.6%
Disability Status	
No disability	50.6%
Disabled or has a disability	35.6%
Questioning	13.8%

Region	
Northeast	16.6%
Midwest	24.9%
South	33.7%
West	24.8%
Urbanicity	
In a small town or rural area	23.6%
In a suburban area near a city	51.0%
In an urban area or city	25.0%

References

1. Day, M., & Brömdal, A. (2026). Mental health outcomes of transgender and gender diverse students in schools: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 27(1), 58-78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2024.2359934>
2. Kelley, J., Pullen Sansfaçon, A., Gelly, M. A., Chiniara, L., & Chadi, N. (2022). School factors strongly impact transgender and non-binary youths' well-being. *Children*, 9(10), 1520. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children9101520>
3. Poteat, V. P., Marx, R. A., Richburg, A., Calzo, J. P., Bliss, C. C., Yoshikawa, H., & Lipkin, A. (2025). Gender-sexuality alliance experiences and LGBTQ+ inclusive school policies and practices predict youth's school belonging. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 54(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-024-02060-0>
4. Chaphekar, A. V., Sevelius, J., Glidden, D., & Vance Jr, S. R. (2024). School absenteeism among racially and ethnically minoritized transgender high school students and their peers: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 75(5), 785-791. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2024.06.028>
5. Pollitt, A. M., Ioverno, S., Russell, S. T., Li, G., & Grossman, A. H. (2021). Predictors and mental health benefits of chosen name use among transgender youth. *Youth & Society*, 53(2), 320-341. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X19855898>
6. Russell, S. T., Pollitt, A. M., Li, G., & Grossman, A. H. (2018). Chosen name use is linked to reduced depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior among transgender youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 63(4), 503-505. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2018.02.003>
7. Leung, E., Kassel-Gomez, G., Sullivan, S., Murahara, F., & Flanagan, T. (2022). Social support in schools and related outcomes for LGBTQ youth: A scoping review. *Discover Education*, 1(1), 18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-022-00016-9>
8. van Vliet, R., van der Ploeg, R., Kretschmer, T., Kiekens, W. J., & Baams, L. (2025). Supportive school strategies for sexually and gender diverse students: A meta-analysis of the associations with bullying-victimization experiences and feelings of school safety. *Educational Research Review*, 47, 100689. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2025.100689>

9. Welton, A. D., & Harris, T. O. (2022). Youth of color social movements for racial justice: The politics of interrogating the school-to-prison pipeline. *Educational Policy*, 36(1), 57-99.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08959048211059728>
10. Macatantan, C. (2025, August 20). How Los Angeles students are meeting the threat of ICE raids. *NEA Today*.
<https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/how-los-angeles-students-are-meeting-threat-ice-raids>
11. Nath, R., Matthews, D.D., Hobaica, S., DeChants, J.P., Eden, T.M., Taylor, A.B., & Suffredini, K. (2026). 2025 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People. West Hollywood, California: The Trevor Project. <https://doi.org/10.70226/EKGT3197>
12. Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., & Menard, L. (2022). The 2021 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN.
13. James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality.
14. Goodenow, C. (1993). The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the Schools*, 30(1), 79-90.
[https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6807\(199301\)30:1%3C79::AID-PITS2310300113%3E3.0.CO;2-X](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6807(199301)30:1%3C79::AID-PITS2310300113%3E3.0.CO;2-X)

Recommended Citation: The Trevor Project & Glisten. (2026). School Experiences and Outcomes Among Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender-Expansive Young People. <https://doi.org/10.70226/ULCU7651>

For more information please contact: Research@TheTrevorProject.org

© The Trevor Project 2026