

BILL: Senate Bill 189 - Public Schools - Inclusive and Diverse English Language Arts - Development of Content Standards and Implementation

DATE: January 17, 2024

POSITION: FAVORABLE

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT: Jaden Farris | chapter@md.glsen.org

GLSEN Maryland, the statewide chapter of GLSEN National, enthusiastically supports Senate Bill 189, which would ensure the integration of inclusive and diverse narratives, particularly those of the LGBTQ+ community, into Maryland’s English language arts curriculum.

As the leading organization centered on creating and sustaining inclusive K-12 education for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) students in the state of Maryland, we believe this legislation is crucial in ensuring that **every** student feels represented and valued in their education.

Research by our parent organization, GLSEN National finds that inclusive curriculum benefits **all** youth, not just LGBTQ+ youth, by improving the overall school climate. Students at schools with inclusive curriculum reported hearing fewer slurs, lower levels of victimization, felt a high sense of belonging, missed fewer days of school, and had a higher GPA in comparison to students whose schools did not have inclusive curriculum.¹ Additional research finds similar patterns among Black LGBTQ+ youth. Further, those attending schools with LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum also felt that their race or ethnicity was more supported at school.²

As children’s literature researcher Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, poignantly stated: books are more than mere text on pages. They are windows offering glimpses into realities both familiar and strange. They are sliding glass doors, inviting us to step into diverse narratives and walk alongside characters whose experiences may differ vastly from our own.³ Especially for those in the LGBTQ+ community, these books are not just stories—they are mirrors reflecting identities that have been long relegated to the shadows.

Accordingly, GLSEN Maryland respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on Senate Bill 189.

¹ 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.

² Truong, N. L., Zongrone, A. D., & Kosciw, J. G. (2020). Erasure and resilience: The experiences of LGBTQ students of color, Black LGBTQ youth in U.S. schools. New York: GLSEN.

³ Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3), ix-xi.