

BILL: HB0014 - County Boards of Education - Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation - Information Collection and Reporting Requirements

DATE: January 29, 2026

POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

CONTACT: Jaden Farris, jaden@md.glsen.org

As the state chapter of the leading national organization centered on creating and sustaining inclusive K-12 education for LGBTQIA+ students, GLSEN Maryland supports House Bill 14. The passage of this bill will help foster safe educational settings for all Marylanders by creating processes for accountability and transparency for acts of bullying, harassment, and intimidation of LGBTQIA+ youth.

Research by GLSEN National¹ finds that **LGBTQ+ students experience high rates of bullying, harassment, and intimidation**, with 83% reporting feeling unsafe at school. **LGBTQ+ students of color are most likely to experience bullying, harassment, and intimidation** at school.

Experiencing a hostile school climate is associated with greater rates of absenteeism, lower GPA, lower graduation rates, and being less likely to go on to college (GLSEN, 2021). Thus, **it is in the best interest of students and our broader community to create supportive school climates for LGBTQ+ youth.**

Creating clear bullying, harassment, and intimidation reporting mechanisms which are inclusive of LGBTQIA+ students provide an opportunity for Maryland school systems to document these incidents in our public schools. Making data on the number of reports received publicly available ensures that parents and guardians have critical information about the climate in their children's schools. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, **collecting information on bullying, harassment, and intimidation of LGBTQIA+ students in schools serves a preventative function, working to improve school climate.** Further research also finds that school policies which explicitly include LGBTQIA+ youth are safer for LGBTQIA+ students in comparison to schools with generic anti-bullying and harassment policies².

To further strengthen HB 14 and enhance its transparency goals, we respectfully request a friendly amendment to require that the data also be disaggregated by individual schools, in addition to being disaggregated by motivating personal characteristics. School-level disaggregation would provide parents, guardians, educators, and policymakers with meaningful insight into school climate conditions, allow for targeted supports where they are most needed

Accordingly, GLSEN Maryland respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** committee report on HB0014.

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 Kull, Ryan & Greytak, Emily & Kosciw, Joseph & Villenas, Christian. (2016). Effectiveness of School District Antibullying Policies in Improving LGBT Youths' School Climate. Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity. 3. 407-415. 10.1037/sgd0000196.