

2008 Annual Report

Gay Straight Educators' Alliance (GSEA)

The purpose of this Assembly is to provide a forum for ongoing and sustained discussion among all individuals who share a professional commitment to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) students, teachers, issues, and academic materials as they pertain to the teaching of English at all levels of instruction. The Assembly is committed to the inclusion of LGBT issues and texts in English studies and English language arts classrooms, fostering research and scholarship, addressing heterosexism and homophobia in academic and school settings, supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans students and teachers, and broadening cultural diversity through more inclusive understandings of difference. The Assembly disseminates information to its members and sponsors sessions at NCTE each year. Members receive a newsletter.

What major actions or projects have been completed by your group since July 1, 2007?

1. Our listserv has been expanded and continues to be a way for assembly members to communicate throughout the year.
2. Our website has been expanded as a way to advertise our existence and expand membership.
3. Our annotated bibliography of LGBT-themed adolescent literature has been updated. The bibliography is available on our website and at our booth at the annual NCTE convention.
4. GSEA officers attempted to visit all LGBT stand sessions at the 2007 annual convention in New York City to publicize the assembly's existence and to try to expand membership.
5. Our booth at the 2007 annual convention attracted a steady stream of traffic and requests for information.

What projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

1. Our primary goal continues to be expanding membership through our website, our information booth at the annual convention, and our continued visibility.
2. Informal discussion has taken place in an attempt to bring LGBT authors to the 2008 convention in San Antonio.
3. Now that NCTE had adopted a resolution calling for increased awareness of LGBT issues among classroom teachers, more discussion needs to take place about exactly how this can be accomplished.
4. In conjunction with the LGBT Advisory Committee, we have been working on a paper exploring the role of language in creating and maintaining an accepting and inclusive classroom community.
5. We are continuing to press for the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in programs being developed to address bullying.

Strategic Governance: Over the past few years, the NCTE Executive Committee has established outcomes and priorities relating to these key topics in our field: Teacher Quality, Adolescent Literacy, Assessment, Writing, Multimodal Literacy and Technology, Research and Teaching , English Language Learners, Professional Development, Closing the Achievement Gap, Reading Research, Meeting the Needs of Audiences Currently Unserved/Underserved by NCTE, and 21st Century Literacies. Does your group have research findings or suggestions to contribute that are relevant to on-going work on these strategic governance topics?

Teacher Quality

At the 2007 annual convention, NCTE passed a resolution calling for increased awareness of LGBT issues among classroom teachers. There remains a great need for specific strategies for accomplishing this goal.

Closing the Achievement Gap

Studies have shown that LGBT students, their allies, students questioning their sexual orientations and gender identities, and students perceived by others to be LGBT are more likely than other students to leave school or to suffer academically as a result of bullying and harassment. Strategies must be developed to protect these students.

Meeting the Needs of Audiences Currently Unserved/Underserved by NCTE

Research is needed in how LGBT issues intersect with issues of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, and ability.

Michael Weinberg,
Chair