Implications of Policy on Inclusivity of LGBT Students:
A Statewide Overview of Public School Districts

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Jean A. King, Adviser

July, 2016

to class, and general support, I would never have finished! I hope the completion of this

process adds richness, as well as normalcy, to our lives.

Dedication

Dedicated to my mom, Phyllis Lehmann, who is the wisest person I know. Your patience, expectations, and perseverance have left an indelible impression on who I am and on what I have yet to accomplish. You have been both a rock and an inspiration to me. From your profound influence at times of trial, including writing a dissertation, I have kept in mind the following:

> *"Good, better, best. Never let it rest. 'Til your good is better and your better is best."*— Saint Jerome

I love you, Mom!

Abstract

Recent events in the public arena have catapulted LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered) issues into the media and everyday conversations. Meanwhile, many LGBT students struggle with school-based harassment, evidence higher rates of homelessness and suicide, and perceive their calls for help and support from school officials to be ineffective. This study examined related non-discrimination policies drawn from a volunteer sample of Minnesota public school district and their respective secondary school administrators. It focused on the presence of district-level policy with enumeration of LGBT as a protected class, the transference of policy statements into student-level documents, as well as the perceptions of school leaders regarding their LGBT student policies. Related literature within the frameworks of social norms, school culture, and policy was explored, and data were collected from telephone interviews and document reviews. First, the results from this study exposed that some districts lack the basic policy language as set forth in Minnesota legislation. Second, in some districts the results uncovered inadequate student-level policy statements misaligned to the district documents they presumably represented. Third, in this study some leaders' perceptions suggested that they were seemingly unaware of what their current school organization afforded the LGBT student community in terms of protections and supports. Finally, a checklist is presented to leaders to aid in determining the current institutional policy status regarding their LGBT-related non-discrimination policies.

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Chapter 1

Statement of the Problem

"Despite the dramatic achievements of the lesbian and gay liberation

movements during the last 30 years, institutionalized heterosexism

continues to shape the developmental and educational experiences of all

youths, regardless of their sexual orientation identities."

— Chesir-Teran (2003, p. 267)

Introduction

Increasingly school districts are being held financially accountable in instances

when individuals or groups of students are bullied. In the past 17 years, nearly $5 million

was recouped from liable districts in cases in which sexual orientation may have been at

issue (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian Rights.

2012). Victims of such bullying repeatedly stated that adults in their schools were

unresponsive to requests for help, offering no visible means of support. It has also been

reported that schools seemingly lacked clear and consistent policies surrounding anti-gay

harassment and bullying. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the school culture has not

evolved to best meet the needs of all students (Alemán, 2009; Biegel & Kuehl, 2010;

Hinde, 2004; Meyer, 2010).

To this end, in 2012 a Minnesota school district was found culpable under similar

circumstances suggesting that this is not an isolated phenomenon. What prompted the

large, sprawling Anoka-Hennepin School District to become embroiled in a media

maelstrom stemming from a lawsuit brought forth by its own students? For over 20 years,

the suburban district was plagued with issues surrounding sexual orientation. Spanning

nearly 172 square miles and encompassing 13 different communities across two counties, Anoka-Hennepin borders Minneapolis, the most urban city in the state. Over 45 different schools and specialized programs cover its geographic area. Despite being adjacent to one of the most urban areas in the state, Anoka is largely a working class area, and the school district's voters have voted primarily Republican in recent elections. The former United States Representative representing a majority of the district's constituents was a Tea Party favorite (Eckholm, 2011b; Erdely, 2012; Mencimer, 2011).

In the early 1990's the Anoka-Hennepin school board directed classroom teachers to "emphasize sexual abstinence and monogamy as part of the new AIDS education curriculum," (Dunbar, 2011b). In doing so, the district placed itself in the center of a controversy. In the mid-1990's the district simultaneously adopted changes to its health curriculum and subsequent policy language preventing homosexuality from being taught as a 'normal, valid lifestyle' within its schools (Dunbar, 2011b). This new policy language became known as "no promo homo" by district staff (Erdely, 2012; Mencimer, 2011).

Less than ten years later a complaint was filed with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights by a mother of a high school student who alleged that two teachers harassed her son because he was gay (Dunbar, 2011b; Erdely, 2012). The complaint resulted in a $25,000 award to the student by the district, and the two teachers were subsequently placed on leave. During this same time period Anoka-Hennepin replaced the former *no promo homo* curriculum policy (Dunbar, 2011a; Dunbar, 2011b; Harlow & Probst, 2011; Smith & Mitchell, 2011; StarTribune, 2012). The new policy stated that issues surrounding sexual orientation had no place in course curricula; however, should the topic be broached, teachers were to "remain neutral" (Mitchell, 2011). The revised

2009 policy became more commonly referred to as the "neutrality policy" (Baca, 2012a; Erdely, 2012; Smith & Mitchell, 2011). This chain of events was a mere foreshadowing of the controversy that soon befell the district.

 Over the course of the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years, eight district students, some of whom identified as homosexual, and others who were perceived to be homosexual by other students, committed suicide, (Eckholm, 2011a; Eckholm, 2011b; Erdely, 2012; Harlow and Probst, 2011; Mencimer, 2011). Parents and friends of the victims declared that bullying played a role, and, despite students' appeals for help, responses by district and school personnel fell short of expectations. The district was subsequently labeled a "suicide contagion area" by state officials (Baca, 2012b; Eckholm, 2011b; Mencimer, 2011).

By late 2010 the Anoka-Hennepin Board of Education voted to clarify district policies surrounding bullying and harassment, yet the recently-adopted *neutrality policy* remained untouched. Critics cited the *neutrality policy* as the only one of its kind in the United States, while policy supporters cited consistency with the state Human Rights Act (Mencimer, 2011; Harlow & Probst, 2011). Nonetheless, the perpetuating allegations of bullying attracted the attention of the United States Departments of Justice and Education, which in turn launched an official investigation into district actions. The investigation was focused on allegations of discrimination in the district based on sex, including peer-on-peer harassment resulting from not conforming to gender stereotypes (Harlow & Probst, 2011).

The investigation by federal officials and resulting media frenzy captured the attention of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and the National Center for

Lesbian Rights (NCLR). Both civil rights groups threatened legal action to end the *neutrality policy*. The SPLC and NCLR alleged that Anoka-Hennepin had not taken its obligation seriously to provide a safe learning environment for all students and made the *neutrality policy* the culprit (Smith and Mitchell, 2011). The civil rights groups stated that the policy contributed to a "hostile atmosphere by preventing teachers from fully addressing bullying against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students" (Dunbar, 2011a) . After two months of investigation and meetings between the district and the federal investigative departments and between the district and the civil rights groups, the SPLC and NCLR filed suit against the district in July of 2011 on behalf of a group of six students alleging harassment based on their real or perceived sexual orientation.

Following the investigation, ensuing public pressures, and amidst the lawsuit investigation, the district replaced the controversial *neutrality policy* with a new policy called the "respectful learning environment curriculum policy" (Baca, 2012b). Finally, in March, 2012, the school board approved a settlement of the lawsuit that was filed by six students. It was found that Anoka-Hennepin had not taken sufficient action in response to students' claims of significant and ongoing harassment based on real or perceived sexual orientation. Findings from the Department of Justice's investigation concluded that "the implementation and interpretation of the District's policies and procedures by District personnel have contributed to the hostile environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students" (Baca, 2012b).

Statement of the Problem

Research documents that public school culture is challenging for LGBT students as many are not receiving the needed support from the adults who are hired to protect and

nurture their learning (Elze, 2003; Griffin & Ouellett, 2003; Horn, Szalacha, & Drill, 2008; Macgillivray, 2000; Szalacha, 2003). Still, in many districts there still exists a lack of clear, well-articulated policy at local levels that specifically addresses the obligation for public schools to nurture and embrace all educational needs of sexual minority youth, especially the requirement to protect them from acts of bullying and harassment related to sexual orientation and gender identity. The two-decade-long journey of the Anoka-Hennepin School District's policy battle gives credence to the fact that school districts themselves become vulnerable when district staff do not conduct due diligence in serving the needs of the vulnerable LGBT students.

Students across the nation face harassment and victimization daily; however, evidence suggests that a marginalized population experiences it more regularly than others throughout their daily school experiences. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students face a myriad of challenges each day attending school. Although it is not possible to calculate the exact number, it is estimated that at least 6% of students across the United States identify themselves as LGBT, while many others may be questioning (Murray, 2011).

It has been found that 90% of LGBT students reported having experienced harassment at school (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2008), with up to 87% reported verbal harassment, upwards of 40% reported being physically harassed, and over 25% reported being physically abused due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Fetner & Kush, 2008; Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2008). LGBT students are bullied more than two times more than any other student group (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010) and have reported experiencing three to

four times the number of incidents of physical violence experienced by their non-LGBT peers (Mayo, 2006). One in two young people is thrown out of his or her home when parents discover their son or daughter is LGBT, and the homelessness rate of LGBT students is up to thirteen times higher than that of their heterosexual peers (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; Corliss, H., Goodenow, C., Nichols, L., & Austin, B., 2011; Mayo, 2006; van Wormer & McKinney, 2003).

Based on statistics such as these, it should not be surprising to learn that the suicide rate of LGBT students is as much as four times higher than that of their heterosexual peers (Biegel, 2010; Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; Mayo, 2006; van Wormer & McKinney, 2003). Among males, those who identified as LGBT contemplated suicide fourteen times more frequently than their heterosexual peers (van Wormer & McKinney, 2003). And among all young people who complete their suicide, three out of ten are related to sexual identity (Strauss, 2005; van Wormer & McKinney, 2003). These trends serve as justification that a problem exists for this vulnerable population that public school organizations should address.

Lugg (2003) described a student who reported anti-gay harassment and bullying to school authorities over 20 different times without receiving interventional support. Sadly, this incident is not isolated. Reports by both Biegel and Kuehl (2010) and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (2008) indicate that nearly two-thirds of those students who reported experiencing anti-gay harassment and bullying to school officials believed the officials seemingly did nothing in response. Unfortunately, within schools, which should provide an equitable learning environment, LGBT students report finding adults who seemingly condone egregious acts of anti-gay harassment and bullying (Elze,

2003; Griffin & Ouellett, 2003; Horn et al., 2008; Macgillivray, 2000; Szalacha, 2003).

Despite efforts to inculcate multi-cultural education, tolerance, and good citizenship, the call for support of teaching respect for LGBT issues within the sphere of public education has struggled (Mayo, 2006). The existing research suggests that it would be appropriate for public school officials to examine the underlying frameworks for supports and beliefs of LGBT students, acts of anti-gay harassment and bullying, and the response and behavior of adults in schools.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) stated in 2005 that policy and practice in the K-12 education setting must be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the learning needs of all students (Biegel, 2010). Furthermore, ASCD believes such an approach solidifies educational excellence and equity for each student. Despite a plethora of research declaring comprehensive school policy with language specifying student protections for issues surrounding sexual orientation as being influential in impacting anti-gay bias behavior (Biegel, 2010; Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2012; Griffin & Ouellett, 2003; Lugg, 2003; Mayo, 2006; Murray, 2011; Rienzo, Button, Sheu, & Li, 2006; Roffman, 2000; Strauss, 2005; Tooms & Lugg, 2008; Wald, Rienzo, & Button, 2002), research finds that fewer than 20% of students attend schools with such a policy in place (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010). This poses questions such as, what barriers exist for schools and their leaders to adopt such policy, or, what events have transpired to prompt or prevent such policy adoption?

Comprehensive school and district policies that define language to protect sexual

minorities, sexual orientation, and gender identity can be effective in combating acts of anti-gay harassment, especially bullying (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2012; Macgillivray, 2004a). In schools and districts with policies specifically naming sexual orientation and gender identity, there was over a 150% increase in staff interventions on behalf of LGBT students during incidents of bullying and harassment related to anti-gay bias (Kosciw et al., 2010). Likewise, there was over a 20% reduction in incidents of victimization and a 10% reduction in frequency of having heard anti-gay remarks.

The same researchers documented that fewer than 20% of LGBT students in these schools reported knowing that their school or district had a comprehensive policy that explicitly addressed bullying and harassment related to sexual orientation and gender identity. The presence of comprehensive policy, specifically naming bullying and harassment related to sexual orientation and gender identity, has been termed by some to be 'uncommon' in districts across the United States (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2012; Macgillivray, 2004a; National School Boards Association, 2004; Rienzo et al., 2006; Wald et al., 2002). This phenomenon might be explained somewhat by those school organizations that may have approved policies while they remain unannounced and unpublished in policy and rule handbooks (Erdely, 2012).

Considering the resulting costs from the multitude of anti-gay bullying and harassment cases that ended in litigation settlements, scholars such as Strauss (2005) contend "the glaring lack of responsibility assumed by school officials suggests that schools continue to function in a way that punishes the [LGBT] student for being gay,

lesbian, or bisexual, rather than penalizing expressions of homophobia" (p. 442). Under

federal law, schools are obliged to protect students from anti-gay bullying and

harassment (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian

Rights, 2012). Yet, as mentioned above and detailed in Table 1, 26 districts from 15

Table 1: *Litigation settlements from anti-gay harassment suits against school districts*

Year	State	Case	Award
1996	Wisconsin	Nabozny v. Podlesny	$962,000
1998	Washington	Iverson v. Kent School District	$40,000
2000	Missouri	Lovins v. Pleasant Hill Public School District	$72,500
2000	Kentucky	Putnam v. Board of Education of Somerset Independent Schools	$135,000
2000	Kentucky	Vance v. Spencer	$220,000
2001	Pennsylvania	Dahle v. Titusville Area School District	$312,000
2001	Nevada	Henkle v. Gregory	$451,000
2001	California	Loomis v. Visalia Unified School District	$130,000
2003	California	Flores v. Morgan Hill Unified School District	$1,100,000
2003	California	Massey v. Banning Unified School District	$45,000
2003	Ohio	Schroeder v. Maumee Board of Education	UNKNOWN
2004	Iowa	Doe v. Perry Community School District	$27,500
2005	Kansas	Theno v. Unified School District 464, Tonganoxie	$440,000
2006	Connecticut	Riccio v. New Haven Board of Education	UNKNOWN
2006	California	Shaposhnikov v. Pacifica School District	$100,000
2007	New Jersey	L.W. v. Tom's River Region Schools Board of Education	$70,000
2007	Indiana	Seiwert v. Spencer-Owen Community School Corporation	UNKNOWN
2008	California	Martinazzi v. Upper-Lake Union Elementary School District	UNKNOWN
2008	California	Ramelli and Donovan v. Poway Unified School District	$300,000
2009	Minnesota	Doe v. Anoka-Hennepin School District	$25,000
2009	California	Hamilton v. Vallejo City Unified School District	$25,000
2009	California	Ketchum v. Newport-Mesa Unified School District	UNKNOWN
2009	California	Roe v. Gustine Unified School District	UNKNOWN
2010	New York	J.L. v. Mohawk Central School District	$75,000
2011	California	Tehachapi Unified School District v. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights	UNKNOWN
2012	Minnesota	Doe v. Anoka-Hennepin School District	$270,000
Total Awarded:			**$4,800,000**

Adapted from "Expensive reasons why safe school s laws and policies are in your district's best interest,"
by Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian Rights. (2012).

states in just 16 years faced nearly $5 million in litigation costs due to anti-gay bullying or harassment (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2012).

History shows the problem is not new, for the medical community published literature raising concerns for LGBT youth being at higher risk of suicide as early as the late 1960's (Strauss, 2005). By the 1980's the mere existence and need for protection of LGBT youth was first acknowledged with the founding of what is now known as the Harvey Milk School in New York City (Strauss, 2005). In 1989 the United States Department of Health and Human Services released a report by Paul Gibson entitled *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide* indicating that 30 percent of completed suicides involved LGBT youth showing evidence of anti-gay harassment, abuse, and fear stemming from their secondary schools (Strauss, 2005). By the early 1990's the state of Massachusetts used the results from Gibson's report to address the anti-gay bullying and harassment in the school environment by the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Students for schools across the state through recommended policy, training, support and counseling (Strauss, 2005). Yet despite lamentable consequences, the plight of the Anoka-Hennepin School District and numerous others across the United States indicates that not all districts have embraced the same recommendations as schools in the state of Massachusetts, thereby substantiating the fact that there is still much work to be done.

The mere fact that school districts such as Anoka-Hennepin end up in a firestorm seemingly defies the recommendations of numerous sources. This leaves open to question the role of school and district leaders in leading efforts to change the trajectory of the

outcry against anti-gay bullying and harassment, to better understand the broader social influences, as well as to advance policies that might serve as umbrellas of protection. This dissertation examines these issues, offering a broad look at the existing local policy landscape and the resulting perceptions of school leaders within this arena in one state.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe how leaders influence a culture of inclusivity for LGBT students through policy at both the district and site levels. The central focus was upon the presence of district-level policy with focused inclusion of LGBT individuals as a protected class, the transference of policy statements into student-level publications, as well as the perceptions of school leaders in regard to the existence of LGBT student policy. The research was conducted with a volunteer sample of school districts and their secondary school administrators from across the state of Minnesota.

This dissertation focused on the role of the school leader in shaping school culture for the inclusion and protection of LGBT students. The resulting research sought to describe the degree to which school organizations engendered a culture that embraced sexual minority youth through the inclusion of LGBT individuals as a protected class in district policy, as well as the inclusion of district policy statements in student-level documentation such as student handbooks. Results also sought to identify how the perceptions of leaders regarding specific school district policy statements influenced the culture of districts and secondary schools for LGBT students. Finally, school leaders' interest levels in establishing clear policy for LGBT individuals were extrapolated as they were asked what impact, if any, a Minnesota district's lawsuit had in their decision making. These data provide insight into the complexities school leaders face in

establishing policy guidelines for engendering a culture where LGBT students are free from anti-gay bullying and harassment, and which affords them equal protection under local policy, as suggested by numerous scholars and researchers.

The selected interpretive framework, or theoretical lens, under which the research questions were examined was *critical theory*. The ontological beliefs of critical theory that focus on power and identity struggles made this interpretive framework suitable for description (Creswell, 2013). Sears (1992) stated that the use of critical theory allows researchers to "bracket the everyday realities of others" (p. 151); in this case it was the discovery of policy shaping the public school experiences of LGBT youth. Research that is critically-based reveals how power and ideology affects the everyday constructions of the lived experiences of those studied (Sears, 1992). Thus, research approaches that are based in critical theory can be a transformative approach that can be used by educators and evaluators who may work in such a setting. Considering the underpinning interpretive framework of critical theory and a focus upon policy serving as the foundation for meeting the needs of LGBT students, the following research questions are studied:

1. What are Minnesota school districts' written policies regarding LGBT youth?
2. To what extent are the district policies reflected in student handbooks in these districts?
3. What is the perception of local leaders about their LGBT school policies?

Significance of the Study

This study was grounded in equity for a marginalized population that is, in many respects, unseen. This study was about school leaders' awareness of existing policies that

protect a marginalized population from anti-gay bullying and harassment at both the district and school levels. On the heels of the Anoka-Hennepin School District facing punitive damages following findings of wrongdoing resulting from litigation by students, this study explored the topic of anti-gay bullying and harassment in public schools beneath the influence of leaders upon school policy, and calls out the need for institutionalized change.

Empirical research has been conducted on anti-gay bullying and harassment for decades with a single focus on individuals, most typically from a victim perspective. Chesir-Teran (2003) calls for a need to extend the topic of anti-gay bullying and harassment instead to a broader context of the heterosexist paradigm through which between-school variation can be more closely examined (p. 268). If there is only focus on the *subculture* of homosexuality or only upon LGBT individuals and there is no confrontation of the conditions of inequity, without the critical theory interpretive framework, individuals will be limited by complacency within another research paradigm (Namaste, 1994). As such, thorough examinations of school-level conceptions of policy and practice are necessary in order to effect change at the policy and organizational culture levels.

Chesir-Teran (2003) delineates four distinct features through which anti-gay bullying and harassment might be examined including physical-architectural, e.g. arrangement of space, locker rooms, hallways, and movement within; program-policy features, including policy, programs, services, resources; personnel, including experience of staff, licensure, background, and values; and social features, more commonly known as social norms (pp. 268-270). As researchers have examined these features individually

as closed systems for decades, Chesir-Teran (2003) calls for a need to study multiple features simultaneously in order for schools to have a more critical view of the state of anti-gay bias and harassment within their organization (p. 273). It is in this manner that the institutional manifestation of anti-gay bullying and harassment can begin to be addressed.

Lipkin (1999) calls upon "the power of the law to galvanize action" (p. 256). In a parallel manner this study remained focused upon existing policy levels for LGBT students in school organizations. The outcomes of this study sought to uncover four main harbingers surrounding LGBT inclusive policy within school organizations. First, the outcomes of the study describe the existence of LGBT inclusive policy at both the school district and building levels. Second, the outcomes of this study describe the levels of congruence between stated district policy and subsequent appearance, or translation, of district policy into school-level publications. Third, the outcomes described leaders' perceptions surrounding LGBT inclusive policy. And, fourth, the outcomes of this study identify recommendations for policy action. Through the explication of these four harbingers, this dissertation compiled the resulting evidence into a thorough summary, including a resulting checklist that staff within school organizations might use in determining levels of compliance of LGBT protections under the auspices of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, 1969 federal hate-crime law, Title IX legislation from 1972, and the Equal Access Act of 1984.

The needs of LGBT students for a school experience that is free from anti-gay bullying and harassment and affords them equal protection under local policy must also be a concern to the evaluation community. The American Evaluation Association

Guiding Principles (2004) set forth that "clear threats to the public good should never be ignored in any evaluation" (p. 4). With an end goal of serving a cause of social justice, evaluators ought to become familiar with the plight of this sexual minority youth community and the experiences they endure in their schools. Empowered with such an understanding, evaluators will be able to forge new partnerships with educational leaders to begin to positively impact the organizational culture of schools as a means to guide change through evaluation. Thus, when asked to evaluate policy, as well as social or cultural aspects of school organizations, evaluators will have a new conception of the current policy landscape for LGBT students in Minnesota districts and secondary schools.

It is time that additional research is conducted to better understand the level of policy existence within school organizations for providing an adequate level of protection on behalf of sexual minority students, as well as the perceptions of school leaders surrounding their understanding and seeming desire to provide such protections. Murray (2011) recounted a 2009 student suicide and stated, "What the school failed to do, however, was to address the problem before it was too late" (p. 215). The question school and local officials must ask themselves is, at what cost will it be for other sexual minority students and their families if they do not act now?

Definition of Key Terms

Culture. Peterson and Deal (1998) defined culture as "the stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time" (p. 28). Tacitly, culture provides a set of norms or expectations that direct the activities of both adults and students in schools (Hinde, 2004).

Hegemony. Subordinate group members are coerced to accept, adopt, and

internalize the dominant group's definition of what is normal, or accepted (Tooms & Lugg, 2008).

Heterosexism. Roffman (2000) defined heterosexism as "the presumption that all people are heterosexual" and "the belief that all people should be heterosexual (p. 133).

Heteronormativity. Lugg (2003) described heteronormativity as "the notion that the entire world is non-queer, or that it should be" (p. 9).

Homophobia. Roffman (2000) defined cultural homophobia as "the irrational fear and/or hatred of lesbian and gay individuals based on culturally-based stereotypes that they are inherently bad, evil, immoral, unnatural, abnormal, perverted, unhealthy, dangerous, sick, contagious, and/or predatory" (p. 133).

Leader. School leaders are defined by Peterson and Deal (1998) to include principals, teachers, parents and community members (p. 30).

LGBT. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered individuals.

Policy. Murray (2011) described formal education policy as "laws, budgetary guidelines, state department regulations, federal mandates, and judicial decisions" and informal education policy as "unwritten" rules people are expected to follow (p. 216). The Business Dictionary Online defines policies as the principles, rules, and guidelines developed or sanctioned by organizations to reach long-term goals. Policies in this sense are usually published in a handbook or manual or electronic format. (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/policies-and-procedures.html#ixzz2ZI9rebHw).

Procedures. The Business Dictionary Online defined procedures as being the specific methods used to explicate policies in action in day-to-day operations of the

organization (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/policies-and-procedures.html#ixzz2ZI9rebHw).

Queer Theory. Queer theory extends beyond LGBT identity and instead challenges pre-existing assumptions about identity, gender, relationships, and sexual orientation (Meyer, 2007). In this sense queer theory creates an oppositional dichotomy of rigidity between male/female, student/teacher, gay/straight, and others.

School Climate. School climate is described by Biegel (2010) as "encompassing such things as school culture, mood, and degree to which people get along, respect for differences, motivation, pride, and vision" (p. 110).

Social Norms. Berkowitz (2005) defined social norms as relying on "indirect methods of persuasion that provide accurate information about what people think or do without telling them what they should do" (p. 198).

Stakeholder. The Business Dictionary Online stated a stakeholder may be a person, group or organization that has a genuine interest or concern with an affiliated organization. Furthermore, stakeholders in this sense can be impact or be impacted by goals, actions, or policies of the affiliated organization. A stakeholder from within the school organization might be a school board member, district administrator, building administrator, teacher, student, parent, or community member at large. (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/stakeholder.html)

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness within the paradigm of research inquiry is described by Guba (1981) as being analogous to the more traditional criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity to thwart allegations of lack of discipline (p. 236).

Overview of Chapters

A literature review explicating theories including social norm theory, school culture theory, and education policy will be explored throughout Chapter Two. The theories presented have underpinnings in the critical theory and queer theory theoretical lens. Chapter Two concludes with a conceptual framework illustrating how social norms and school culture directly influence the school experience of LGBT students.

Chapter Three describes the research methodology used in this study in order to examine how leaders' perceptions of their decision making influenced a culture of inclusivity for LGBT students through policy at both the district and site levels. A descriptive methodology grounded in a qualitative approach was used. The focus was made upon existing policies at the district and school levels that identified LGBT individuals as a protected class, as well as perceptions of secondary school principals regarding their understanding and actions surrounding policy.

The resulting findings are shared in Chapter Four and will disclose to what extent each school organization engendered a system that embraced LGBT protections with respect to inclusive language in policy at both the district and school levels, what impact the Anoka-Hennepin lawsuit had upon their policy decision-making, and additional thoughts of the leaders regarding their models for inclusion and protection of LGBT students. Rich data descriptions and emerging data themes are shared throughout Chapter Four.

Chapter Five features a summary of the research findings paying special attention to how the findings relate to existing literature. Resulting implications are explored in Chapter Five in addition to any emerging themes that might influence the future practice

of evaluators who work in the field of public education. Lastly, recommendations for future research are shared, including a practical policy checklist for practicing school administrators.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Individuals who have championed the movement for gay rights realized that identity politics wielded great influence (Button, Rienzo, & Wald, 1997). While some may regard sexual orientation as a matter that has no place in the public arena, events in recent years indicate the need for legal protection from discrimination and harassment is no longer a struggle in seclusion (Button et al., 1997). Though not completely condoning homosexuality, there appears to be a common belief among Americans that LGBT persons as a marginalized group deserve legal protection from discrimination (Button et al., 1997).

Anti-gay bullying and harassment of LGBT students in an educational setting are not a phenomenon in isolation; rather, they are influenced by several hegemonies including social norms, organizational climate and culture, leadership, and policy. Each will be explored throughout the following literature review and detailing how the hegemony shapes the decree for improved experiences for LGBT youth throughout secondary schools.

The literature for this study was collected through four distinct ways. First, literature was selected for review by using literature search databases including Google Scholar, JSTOR, Taylor and Francis, and EBSCOhost Online Research. Search parameters included concatenations of the following terms: 'anti-gay', 'bullying', 'LGBT', 'queer', 'school culture', 'school policy', 'school leaders', and 'social norms'. Second, from those sources that were selected for review, a thorough analysis was conducted of the bibliography. Works by similar researchers, journals, or topics were then acquired for

further review. Third, sources acquired during coursework at the University of Minnesota were examined for appropriateness. Fourth, recommendations from other researchers were taken into consideration. Through a combination of these efforts, a wealth of scholarly resources was reviewed with many included for use in this dissertation.

Critical Theory and Queer Theory as Interpretive Frameworks for Social Justice

Qualitative research does not represent the use of data reproduction and verification methods in an unreflective manner, nor does it represent merely generating a narrative written carefully to reflect the context of the language and culture of the participants (Sears, 1992). Instead, according to Sears (1992), the epistemological reflexivity of qualitative research engenders a "state of being: a willingness to engage and be engaged, the ability to momentarily stop internal dialogue and to engage reflectively in a search for the meanings constructed by others and ourselves" (p. 152). Thus, to reconstruct social relations rather than to construct personal meanings is the sole mission of a qualitative researcher that is critically-based (Sears, 1992).

Critical theory and queer theory are among those interpretive frameworks in qualitative research that are intended to impact social justice and will each be examined in this dissertation. The theories were selected based on the following four elements: First, the research problems and subsequent questions enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of individuals or group culture for specific topics related to this project including social hierarchy, hegemony, unequal power relationships, and inequity (Creswell, 2013). Second, the research procedures emphasized an interpretive approach with respect to data collection, analysis, as well as reporting of results to participants in an effective manner (Creswell, 2013). Third, researcher subjectivity was ever-present

throughout the course of the study (Creswell, 2013). Fourth, although the culminating research was presented in a traditional manner, the interpretive approach lent itself to social justice such that results can inform future actions of the participants (Creswell, 2013).

Critical theory. Critical theory was the necessary and primary interpretive framework employed throughout the course of this study for it enabled the researcher the ability to assess "how things are in order to transform them into what they ought to be" (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010, p. 7). Critical theory maintains less focus upon the theory itself and more focus upon the study and dissection of overall society (Mabry, 2010). Critical theory keenly offers researchers means to understand how social structures impact individual's beliefs, values, actions, liaisons, and communication meanwhile providing insight into mechanisms they can change, combat, or recalibrate normative actions or ways of thinking (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010).

Critical theory, with origins from the 1920's and 1930's in socialist and Marxist philosophies, elicits a key theoretical function as a "sustained critique of all social formations, whether cultural, economic, or philosophical, with an eye to preventing any one form from taking control of the world in a way that is antidemocratic, unjust, or oppressive" (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). Within critical theory, experiences extending from oppressive systems have become so entrenched in the status quo day-to-day activities that there is a distortion of the desired values and experiences of the members. Thus, the effect masks the interaction of the dominant culture upon all individuals such that it becomes 'natural', or the expected norm (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010).

Within the critical theory perspective, the delineation of human gender roles and traits according to social prescriptions of feminine and masculine rationalizes the world in a particular way and ultimately organizes schools by patriarchy (Sears, 1992). By removing gender and sexuality from the social, political, and historical construct, the cultural variability of gender behaviors and identities is left unappreciated and insufficient attention is paid to those power dynamics related to sexuality. Any critical analyses or public discourse about homosexuality is then disabled and perpetuates the dichotomy of heterosexuality v. homosexuality, or, queer theory (Sears, 1992). As such, critical theory affords researchers an ability to challenge divisions that have evolved into normative structures of a world that has been sectioned by gender and orientation on the basis of control, power, and knowledge. Critical theory rests upon a conflicting continuum of extremes, with one end asserting there is no impunity for individuals without first recalibrating the surrounding structures; while the other end provides for complete freedom from the limitations of all surrounding structures (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010).

Critical theory affords evaluators many methods to engender the amelioration of a society that is more socially encompassing (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). Evaluators are charged to promote social justice and democratic ideologies through critical theory (Mabry, 2010). Within the realm of critical theory, evaluators accept a responsibility to benefit society through the facilitation of change based on collected information, instead of through merely the technical aspects of evaluation practice (Mabry, 2010). Stakeholders from multiple views and positions within an organization are engaged in evaluations rooted in critical theory. Freeman and Vasconcelos (2010) purport that

criticisms of critical theory call for increased examination of its strengths and weaknesses and that evaluators must consider how an evaluation based in critical theory can be of benefit to programs and society (p. 17).

Research that is critically-based reveals how power and ideology affects the everyday constructions of the lived experiences of those studied (Sears, 1992). Rottmann (2006) contends that by examining critical theory from different interpretive frameworks, the queer theoretical framework can be used as a "conceptual lens to help educators broaden current notions of 'effective' leadership, and challenge heterosexist discrimination in schools" (p. 10). Thus, research approaches that are rooted in critical theory can serve as a transformative approach that educators and evaluators working in such a setting can use.

Queer theory. Emerging from the tenets of critical theory is queer theory. Having a role that is more a focus of inquiry and less a methodology, queer theory serves an important role within the literature review in setting the stage for the theoretical frameworks related to anti-gay bullying and harassment that were explored (Creswell, 2013). Similar to critical theory, queer theory questions status-quo assumptions centered upon relationships, identity, gender, and sexual orientation (Meyer, 2007). Queer theory elicits the insurmountable task of moving beyond one's conceptions with regard to sexuality (Namaste, 1994). In essence, queer theory provides the critical, juxtaposed foundation upon which concepts such as social norms, school culture, and the precepts of leaders' decision making surrounding school policy, are based.

Queer theory initially commenced as a critique of enforced norms surrounding gender and sexuality, as well as a means to control the boundaries of 'normal' (Shlasko,

2005). Under the guise of queer theory, contentions of what is 'reality' or 'normal' are believed to be socially constructed (Mayo, 2006; McDonough, 2007; Oakes, 1995; Smith, 2003). Theorists of queer theory contend there to be an overarching importance of sex as the cornerstone of social identity and a single concept of sexuality (Oakes, 1995). Researchers have termed queer theory 'an assault against the regime of sexuality itself' as they hold tight to a dichotomous antagonism between homosexuality and heterosexuality that may be considered far-reaching by some (McDonough, 2007; Oakes, 1995; Shlasko, 2005; Smith, 2003). At its very core, queer theory struggles to explain the world while simultaneously serving as its own contradiction.

Queer theory gained importance for five facets of the esoteric homosexual v. heterosexual dichotomy. First, queer theory has disassociated the critique of gender and sexuality from that of lesbian and gay identity alone (Halperin, 2003; Shlasko, 2005). Secondly, queer theory has supported non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality by its encouragement to resist any form of normalization (Halperin, 2003; Mayo, 2006). Third, it has provided the foundation for numerous critiques of both homophobia and heterosexism (Halperin, 2003; McDonough, 2007). Fourth, queer theory has redefined the practice of LGBT history (which, throughout time has always placed sexual minorities 'outside the norm') for under queer theory, no norm exists (Halperin, 2003; Yep, Lovaas, & Elia, 2003). And fifth, it has aggrandized the extensive work on behalf of LGBT students (Halperin, 2003). Thus, queer theory has truly served as a catalyst for the evolution of core LGBT issues into the mainstream and should likewise serve as a lens through which the LGBT education experience may be examined.

It has been argued that queer theory both disrupts the normalcy of education and

retains the navigational challenges of education all due to its own provocative nature (Mayo, 2007). Queer theory differs from other liberal theoretical perspectives through how its own dichotomy puts forth and removes boundaries. The theoretical contradiction of queer theory may, in fact, represent an attempt to norm what is foundationally a faction that disrupts norms (Mayo, 2006). Through similar contradictions queer theory attempts to comprehend the external environment, but readily admits such a feat is impossible.

Researchers recount a common theme of queer theory surrounding LGBT in the perpetuation of heteronormativity and to socialize youth away from futures that might align with the tenets of queer theory (Kumashiro, 2003; Mayo, 2006; McDonough, 2007; Rottmann, 2006; Shlasko, 2005). Within the theme has been discussion about focusing too much on the "other" with respect to social realities (Koschoreck & Slattery, 2006). There has been, however, a disregard for examining the power and knowledge structures associated with heterosexist hegemony such that there is no challenge to the heterosexual normative structure itself; thus, researchers contribute to the perpetuation of a dual social system with respect to sexual orientation (Koschoreck & Slattery, 2006). Although some efforts to meet the needs of LGBT students within the current social structures may exist, they rarely lead to embracing LGBT students within an educational environment in a more authentic, accredited manner (Shlasko, 2005).

It is alleged that queer theory challenges normative structures through its embrace of both physical and emotional school fundamentals that oft times are hidden through mandated judiciousness (Rottmann, 2006). There exists research that has focused on the tribulations of LGBT students as they negotiate their educational experience, yet research

on the challenge for the education system to embrace homosexuality remains nonexistent (Shlasko, 2005). Kumashiro suggests, "There is something significantly disruptive about those educational practices that some in society want to silence" (2003, p. 366). The incongruence of research resonates with similar conclusions drawn by other queer theorists (Halperin, 2003; Mayo, 2007; Rottmann, 2006; Shlasko, 2005). If both the past and current educational systems were examined through a lens of queer theory, it would be revealed that public schools were fundamentally built upon both heterosexist and sexist structures (Rottmann, 2006).

Although queer theory provides a glimpse into a means to help justify the paucity of educational policy that protects LGBT youth, it truly affords more shortcomings than benefits through a provision of a possible explanation. Efforts to affect social justice and civil rights are weakened by queer theory through a perceived erasure of gay identity (Smith, 2003). Queer theory has been called "a theoretical manifestation of a social movement aimed primarily at advancing the interests of queer people" (McDonough, 2007, p. 807). Seemingly queer theory seeks to serve only the oppressed sexual minority; when, in fact, it is the institutional majority that must benefit from the theoretical foundations to impart change.

Theoretical Perspectives of School-Based Harassment of LGBT Students

Three perspectives of supporting literature will be examined to better understand the underlying causes and belief systems surrounding LGBT bias-based harassment, as well as the underlying structures surrounding adult behaviors that extend from the interpretive framework of critical theory and queer theory. First, social norms serve as the first perspective through which anti-gay harassment and bullying are explored. Second,

school culture, specifically those theories that posit the role of the school leader as the driver for any change reform, are examined to uncover the role that school culture plays in perpetuating the status quo for sexual minority (namely, LGBT) students. Third, policy implications are explored to substantiate that numerous sources exist that cite policy as a cornerstone for changing the trajectory of anti-gay bullying and harassment in schools. The emerging themes from the three literature perspectives provide solid evidence that social norms, policy and culture, and the role of leaders in influencing each are the bedrock for bettering the lived school experience for countless LGBT students.

Social norm theory. Social norm theory is the first theoretical perspective through which prejudicial acts may be more closely examined and serves as a useful lens through which to understand the relationship among LGBT biased-based harassment, school culture, and policy. Berkowitz (2003) applied social norm theory across many areas, including problem-college drinking, eating disorders, bystander behavior, as well as prejudicial and generally problem behavior towards others. Theories of socialization, including social norm theory, state that prejudiced attitudes are formed through the influence of social identities, group membership, and interpersonal interactions (Eder & Nenga, 2003; Poteat, 2007).

There is a long history of the use of norms in understanding human behavior. According to researchers, the use of norms for categorization and diagnostic purposes has occurred in social science applications since the late 19th century (Talburt, 2004). Developmental norms and related evaluations were initially introduced to assist psychologists, educators, and reformers for the purpose of studying, diagnosing, and administering youth within an identifiable population. Talburt (2004) disclosed that

throughout the emergence of normed identification surrounding LGBT youth, "adults must evaluate and guide adolescents' development and entry into appropriate citizenship and social relations" (p. 117). Such a history gives credence to the exploration of social norm theory as a reasonable approach to better understand the interplay of LGBT students within a public school setting with regard to social interaction and expectations.

Clarity of expected behavior for individuals through social norms might both confound expected outcomes and indicate some positional migration of normed behaviors. Time interval research by Zitek and Hebl (2006) conducted on a group of university women uncovered that the clarity of the social norms influenced the extent of *homophobic* (intolerance of homosexuals) or other prejudicial acts were exhibited. As a social norm became more ambiguous, research participants were more likely to look to the reaction of others. Bowen and Bourgeois (2001) studied the effects of social norms upon students living in two dormitories at a large public university. Each dormitory was co-ed and housed both heterosexual and LGBT-identified students. Residents were surveyed at different intervals whether they personally knew LGBT individuals and whether they held negative or positive feelings toward those individuals. Bowen and Bourgeois' research supported the effectiveness of close interactions among peers as an effective means of reducing prejudice related to sexual minorities. Each case clearly illuminates that a sense of familiarity is a key determinant in reducing social norms that perpetuate anti-gay bias and behavior.

Research suggests that social norm interventions, including deliberate exposure to sexual minority populations, are successful in reducing anti-gay behavior occurrences (Berkowitz, 2003; Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001; Grabill, Lasane, Povitsky, Saxe, Munro,

Phelps & Straub, 2005; Poteat, 2007; Zitek & Hebl, 2006). Yet it is clear that social norm intervention cannot serve as the sole intervention. Critical components for sustainable change to occur include: (a) provision of training and professional development for staff, (b) ensuring policies embrace the LGBT population and address acts of homophobia, and (c) establishment of school-wide programming to directly address homophobia (Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001; Mayo, 2004; Macgillivray, 2007; Poteat, 2007; Zitek & Hebl, 2006). Public schools must look to key findings surrounding social norms as a means to begin formulating strategies to reverse the socially-stigmatizing trends.

Social norm theory predicts that individuals will react in a predetermined way to the expression or behavior of others in an attempt to conform. There are two types of motivation behind the attempt to conform to social norms: (a) *pluralistic ignorance* and (b) *normative conformity*. The first type, pluralistic ignorance, can be defined as the desire to "read" a social group accurately and then attempt to match the group behavior expectations (Berkowitz, 2003; Berkowitz, 2005; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Grabill et al. 2005). Pluralistic ignorance is highest when the fear of social disapproval motivates an individual's behavior to adjust (Berkowitz, 2003). The second type of social norm motivation, normative conformity, can be defined as the motivation for seeking social approval from others (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Berkowitz (2003) terms this type of motivation "false consensus" to describe individuals who unknowingly perpetuate problem behavior under the assumption that their actions match the 'true' norm.

The dissonance that exists between challenges to the heteronormativity within the community at large and the oft time hostile environments that LGBT students face each day create conflict that seems insurmountable to many (Koschoreck & Slattery, 2006).

Multiple cases of anti-gay violence and harassment endured by sexual minority youth point to school cultures that are steeped in heterosexual norms (Alemán, 2009; Lugg, 2003). The power of public school culture over time is uncovered as the executor of expected norms surrounding heteronormativity and homophobia (Lugg, 2003). Efforts to address the existing norms in school communities will bring some level of conflict in order to begin to initiate cultural change (Alemán, 2009; Peterson & Deal, 1998).

Pluralistic ignorance is of greatest influence when the motivation of an individual's behavior is fear of social disapproval (Berkowitz, 2003). This is most especially true for males who face acceptance by peers through a masculine image. Often times this type of acceptance comes at the cost of one suppressing behavior that may be viewed as incongruent to the masculine image despite the fact that the individual does not genuinely agree with the norm. Ultimately, this becomes false consensus or unintentional encouragement to those males who exemplify the masculine image and may result in a perpetuation of belief that the inappropriate behaviors are seemingly congruent with expected social norms.

Research indicates the leadership practices within a school potentially have a greater impact than policies or procedures in the scope of teacher intervention in incidents of gendered harassment or homophobia (Alemán, 2009; Lugg, 2003; Meyer, 2010; Murray, 2011; Roffman, 2000; Rottmann, 2006). Stated more simply, leaders set the tone through expectations of anticipated behavioral norms. Staff and students alike, through normative conformity, are expected to abide by such norms, regardless if they are unjust. The above references present important information considering the previous suggestions that school officials may have been unresponsive to acts of anti-gay bias and

harassment (Elze, 2003; Griffin & Ouellett, 2003; Horn et al., 2008; Macgillivray, 2000; Szalacha, 2003).

Students unwillingly conform to expected behavior as defined by existing social norms, including those students who consider themselves uninvolved bystanders. Social norm researcher H. Wesley Perkins uses the term "carriers of the misperception" to identify those bystanders who may not actively perpetuate the misperceived norm, yet allow the problem behavior to continue (Perkins, 1997). There exists literature on such bystanders that detail three reasons individuals do not react despite their desire to do so: first, social influence through which individuals may see others doing nothing and assume there is no problem; second, audience inhibition through which individuals may fear that doing something may cause embarrassment; and third, diffusion of responsibility through which individuals assume others will do something if they do not. A confounding factor is that bystanders often think that others are unbothered by what is occurring and, thus, allow anti-gay behavior to perpetuate.

Another body of literature on bullying defines bystanders as those who stand around and watch fights without helping the victim (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Hong and Espelage (2012) state that "they [bystanders] enjoy watching fights, often encouraging the bully" (p. 312). It is alleged that bystanders also play a key role as a 'look out' alerting those bullying that an adult may be approaching. This information puts bystanders in a negative light. Conversely, gender and age serve as moderating factors in bystander behavior as younger children and females seemingly support victims or try to stop acts of bullying more often. Hong and Espelage (2012) indicate that research on bystander behavior is limited based on a recent meta-analysis on bullying programs that

disclosed findings that only three of sixteen identified programs targeted or evaluated behavior by bystanders (p. 313). Certainly this serves as justification for further understanding of the role of bystanders in the form of school leaders or students alike during acts of bullying and anti-gay harassment.

It is unknown whether certain individuals or groups of individuals are responsible for the majority of anti-gay behavior. Poteat (2007) contends that even a small number of individuals or peer groups who are homophobic could still negatively impact the educational experience of LGBT students (p. 1839). This is especially true if the behavior of the offenders is perceived as being condoned. Furthermore, peers of LGBT students are in prominent roles influencing social norms that include homophobic attitudes, as well as anti-gay bullying and harassment. Each of these ideas warrants further exploration to determine the extent to which students are conforming to expected (normed) behavior unwillingly.

When a behavior does not match the expected norm, people then view it as undesirable. Social norm theory provides a basis for a behavioral standard within a group such that any deviation from these norms is viewed as socially undesirable (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Griskevicius, 2007). To align with social group norms exhibiting homophobia, peers could influence bystanders to increase or decrease their anti-gay attitudes and behavior, or, alternately, provide implied validation of attitudes and behavior over time (Poteat, 2007). Since the current social norm in public schools aligns with heterosexual behavior, LGBT students may feel pressured to conform so as to gain peer approval (Schwartz, 1994). Such pressure to conform to social norms contributes to LGBT students feeling banished from traditional school life, thereby imposing forced

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isolation or a sense of invisibility. Furthermore, when expected social norm behavior is unclear or ambiguous, the likelihood of individuals aligning with negative or prejudicial acts increases (Zitek & Hebl, 2006). Thus, organizations must seek ways to begin to 'teach' social norms that embrace all students—essentially 're-norming' public schools.

Researchers attribute social influence as being an effective component in both reducing and perpetuating prejudicial viewpoints of denigrated groups (Zitek & Hebl, 2006). Berkowitz (2003) is one such researcher who lauds the effectiveness of social norm interventions and presents an intervention framework consisting of five stages: (a) individuals notice the event, (b) individuals interpret the event as problematic, (c) individuals feel some sense of responsibility to find a solution, (d) individuals possess skills to act, and (e) individuals intervene to change course (Berkowitz, 2003). Such a social norm intervention framework is designed to alter the negative function of social norms and demonstrates that if students are presented different information and 'taught' how to appropriately react to non-heterosexual norm behaviors, seemingly inappropriate social norms would be replaced with improved norms.

One way to counter existing social norms may be through the introduction of new norms. A heuristic model based on previous models is presented by Troiden (1989) as a means to effectively recalibrate expected social norms. Although not initially intended for use in public school settings, the premises of the model seemingly apply Troiden's intent to reflect upon existing social norms and to consider what is needed for LGBT acclimation. Unique to this model is its reference to historical and socio-cultural variations in LGBT identity development as well as its inference to deny lock-step linearity (Talburt, 2004). Troiden's model begins with acknowledgment of experiences of

gender difference and stigma, moves for a need or desire for more knowledge and contact

with others, and essentially resolves through commitment to an identity and role

(Troiden, 1989). The model offers a shift in positive role development for LGBT

individuals; however, if used as a model to open up experiences and conversations within

public school settings, it could afford a reasonable means through which to change the

trajectory of existing social norms. The key to changing the trajectory is to "create an

environment in which conventional peer, family, community, and cultural norms can be

examined critically," such that students would have access to new information, be

challenged by the surrounding staff members, receive emotional support, and most

importantly, peer debate (Lipkin, 1999).

Social norm theory may be an effective intervention in addressing anti-gay bias

and bullying behavior. Two programs were formed to reduce prejudicial acts on groups,

such as LGBT students, and employed the use of the intervention framework in an effort

to change the negative course of social norms and proved to be successful. One program

is the Ally Building Workshop at Western Washington University (Berkowitz, 2003).

The Ally Building Workshop conducted a social norm marketing campaign with efforts

to end oppression of student groups (Berkowitz, 2003). This was accomplished by first

gathering information through focus groups and surveys, and later by conducting

workshops and exposing students to social media that embraced all students. In another

application of the social norms approach, Smolinsky (2002) developed a small group

norms intervention to foster heterosexual ally behaviors towards LGBT individuals. The

Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley employed the intervention framework in an effort to

empower students into acting as LGBT allies through attempts to correct misperceptions

(Smolinsky, 2002). The results of each of these programs aligned with findings by Zitek and Hebl (2006) in which once subjects were first introduced different norms, they were more likely to oppose prejudicial acts after hearing others do so first (p. 7). Such an approach aligns with recommendations by other researchers declaring that for social norms to change, training is a key component of any effort that will be sustainable over time (Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001; Mayo, 2004; Poteat, 2007; Zitek & Hebl, 2006).

Social norm theory has been successfully applied in several areas— college drinking, eating disorders, bystander behavior, as well as prejudicial and generally problem behavior towards others (Berkowitz, 2003). However, the empirical research applying social norm theory for LGBT individuals is limited. This paucity presents both an opportunity for seminal research in public school settings and a need for caution considering the potential political volatility of the subject. Such high numbers of LGBT youth ravaged by homelessness, assault, and suicide give researchers pause to wonder if society views this sexual minority group through a normative lens expecting such dramatic struggles. When considering the establishment of new norms to provide protections for all students, including those who identify as LGBT, research suggests proceeding with caution (Talburt, 2004). There is fear that schools and governing bodies might be merely trading one negative heterosexual system of stereotypes for a homosexual system of stereotypes.

School culture theory. School culture theory is the second theoretical perspective to illuminate the contextually changing landscape of culture within public schools. Biegel and Kuehl (2010) define school culture as generally being comprised of the following: (a) vision, (b) motivation, (c) pride, (d) 'mood' pervasive within an organization, (e) the

amount to which individuals get along, and (f) tolerance of differences (p. 10). Specific theories that posit the role of the school leader as the driver for any change reform to uncover the role school culture plays in perpetuating the status quo for sexual minority (namely, LGBT) students.

Influential organizational change agents Peterson and Deal (1998) define culture in their highly cited work as "the stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time" (p. 28). Tacitly, culture provides a set of norms or expectations that direct the activities of both adults and students in schools (Hinde, 2004). The power of public school culture over time is uncovered as the executor of expected institutional norms surrounding heteronormativity and homophobia (Lugg, 2003). It is the tension between the norms bestowed by the existing school culture and the impending need to change the culture that provides a compelling dichotomy to further investigate.

School cultures are influenced in two ways—formally and informally. First, formal influences include organizational structures, policies, level of education of employees, and curricular and instructional practices (Meyer, 2010). Second, informal influences include the recognized norms and values in the school communities. Formal change influences upon school cultures must first be made at the leadership level across policy, professional development and training, and must include a provision of dedicated resources and supports as a means to engender a positive and nurturing school culture (Alemán, 2009; Hinde, 2004; Meyer, 2010). Specifically, policy that directly addresses harassment surrounding sexual diversity and includes clearly defined guidelines and language must be adopted to achieve full-scale cultural change (Meyer, 2010; Murray, 2011; Rienzo et al., 2006). Subsequently, to affect the informal structures of school

cultures, delivery of focused professional development and training for students and staff will impart effective policy enforcement once stakeholders are made aware of their obligations; furthermore, community stakeholders must be educated on the process and need for policy change with the goal that they effectively embrace it (Meyer, 2010; Roffman, 2000). Finally, school organizations must allocate sufficient resources including funding, time, and training materials with the purpose of the cultural change effort to be viewed as credible (Meyer, 2010).

By resisting institutional expectations for perpetuation of heteronormativity, schools will help ensure the physical and emotional safety and betterment of not only LGBT, but all students alike (Koschoreck & Slattery, 2006). It is through effective self-reflection of leaders and building coalitions and consistent activism in school settings that school culture might be changed with a focus upon social justice (Alemán, 2009). Yet a shift in school culture alone is not enough for cultural change to succeed (Alemán 2009; Meyer, 2010; Peterson & Deal, 1998). Such an effort can reverse if lacking appropriate advocacy and support by the staff and school community (Mayo, 2010).

School leaders (who include not only administrators, but also teachers, parents, and community members) are the key to influencing school culture (Meyer, 2010; Peterson & Deal, 1998). To shift the tone of an institution to become less homophobic requires clear support from leaders within the school organization including superintendents, principals, and the associates (Lipkin, 1999). Hinde (2004) declares that school leaders determine and execute the fundamental suppositions of the culture of a school organization. A charismatic leader can also influence the shift, particularly for rallying a group of faculty around the cause such that it is seen as everyone's

responsibility (Lipkin, 1999).

Research indicates the leadership practices within a school potentially have a greater impact than policies or procedures on the scope of teacher intervention in incidents of gendered harassment or homophobia (Alemán, 2009; Lugg, 2003; Meyer, 2010; Murray, 2011; Roffman, 2000; Rottmann, 2006). Meyer (2010) asserted that the way in which school principals and their designees decide to lead a school has possibly a greater impact on school culture than the policies and practices (p. 123). The mere notion that a school leader's practices have greater influence over a teacher's attempts to intervene on behalf of students is compelling information considering that school officials have been found to be unresponsive to acts of anti-gay bias and harassment (Elze, 2003; Griffin & Ouellett, 2003; Horn et al., 2008; Macgillivray, 2000; Szalacha, 2003). The indirect influence of the school administrator has been found to be significant in impacting the breadth and frequency of teacher intervention in incidents of anti-gay bias and bullying.

School leaders shape the school culture in three distinct ways. First, leaders must examine the culture with hopes of better understanding it (Alemán, 2009; Hinde, 2004; Peterson & Deal, 1998). Second, leaders identify core values within the culture. Third, leaders reinforce positive core values and shared purpose (Peterson & Deal, 1998). The third way in which leaders indirectly influence a school's organizational culture is through the allocation of time and resources including professional development, which policies receive primary focus and enforcement, recognition and reward decision making, and how individuals may be supervised or reprimanded (Meyer, 2010). It is when school leaders fail to intervene by putting an end to anti-gay bullying and harassment that a

school climate and culture becomes one of fear, hate and violence (Koschoreck &

Slattery, 2006).

When conflict exists within a school organization, it serves as an impetus for

cultural change (Alemán, 2009). Educational leaders may take advantage of such conflict

as "leadable moments" with a social justice end in mind. It becomes complicated to

narrowly determine the underlying stimulus for change as merely that the culture of the

organization is unhealthy, for often times such conflicts are instances of narrow or

"normed" definitions of culture and professional practice (Alemán, 2009; Peterson &

Deal, 1998). Alemán (2009) describes that leaders who are effective and efficient

managers of school culture may be able to leverage this type of conflict for social justice

change. Such leaders understand how to navigate the political landscape while

simultaneously involving stakeholders in the process. Lipkin (1999) states that the level

of the administrator's commitment is enhanced when they are first convinced of the value

of anti-gay bullying and harassment interventions and when they are involved in the

planning and delivery of change events and activities (p. 256). It is critical to bear in

mind, however, that fundamentally proposed cultural change will be rejected if it is

incongruent with the culture and philosophy of the current staff (Hinde, 2004).

Challenges that might impact such change efforts are threefold. First, there exists

a level of discomfort for the concept of sexual orientation to become a 'school matter' and

thus many eschew involvement (Lipkin, 1999). Second, there is a trend for males to be

the majority serving in key leadership roles within school organizations. Thus, male

dominance imparts some general sexist and heterosexist tendencies perhaps partly due to

a long history of a stereotypical school administrator being somewhat sexist, intolerant of

women or LGBT individuals, and perhaps a historic tendency to dismiss anti-gay

bullying or harassing behavior (Lipkin, 1999). Third, school leaders are often in denial

either about there being LGBT students attending their school as well as there being a

clandestine culture of intolerance toward LGBT students (Lipkin, 1999).

In addition to the administrators, other adults also have a direct influence upon

shaping school culture. There is an additional burden put upon teachers to be cognizant of

the manner in which their opinions are expressed about politics, culture, race, religion,

socio-economic class, physical ability, gender, and sexuality due to the power differential

between adults and students in schools (Lipkin, 1999). Henstrand (2006) professed, "The

beliefs of members of the culture and subgroups are ultimately more important than the

facts about what actually happens" (p. 7). Although school building and district

administrators may be able to independently accomplish some level of change in school

culture regarding homophobia and heterosexual norms, they must rely upon others to be

part of the change effort (Alemán, 2009; Henstrand, 2006; Rottmann, 2006). The cultural

context in which teachers work influences each aspect of their pedagogy; yet the

pervasive element of school culture has been termed elusive and difficult to define

(Hinde, 2004). Ultimately culture influences and to some degree limits, teachers'

willingness to change. Change within the topic of homosexuality, it appears, will be

difficult for it is one characteristic for which teachers have been given no boundaries or

restrictions and about which many teachers seemingly say anything negative they wish

(Lipkin, 1999).

Schweiker-Marra (1995) examined the relationship of teacher change to school

culture. Through her work twelve norms of school culture were identified as being

impactful surrounding change. Schweiker-Marra identified that the first six norms were specific to teacher knowledge and qualities and included (a) collegiality, (b) experimentation, (c) high expectations, (d) trust and confidence, (e) tangible support, and (f) knowledge base reference. The remaining six norms also were related to teachers, but were directed at their interaction with one another and with their administrators (Schweiker-Marra, 1995). It was shown that the presence of the norms not only promoted change, but also increased as the change process progressed.

The influence of teachers upon the change process of school culture is directly related to their own internal influences including educational training and experience, values, and biases (Henstrand, 2006; Hinde, 2004; Meyer, 2010). It should not be overlooked that the same internal influences, or conflicts, may serve as the primary justification to conquer forms of structural resistance (Alemán, 2009; Meyer, 2010). Koschoreck and Slattery (2006) call for teachers to "examine their complicity and silence on gay bashing, teasing, and violence against minorities and those perceived as different in schools and society" (p. 154). Mayo (2010) contends that despite being cloaked in a seemingly hostile environment, school climates can be shifted by ongoing efforts by students, teachers, administrators, and the school community at large. Nonetheless, the impetus for such cultural change must initially begin with the leaders because the hierarchical structure of schools dictates that teachers must follow the direction of the school leaders regardless of other cultural influences of the school organization; yet all stakeholders must be engaged in the process beginning at the most personal level (Alemán, 2009; Henstrand, 2006; Hinde, 2004; Meyer, 2010).

Researchers purport that school culture change begins through initiatives, which

include changes to policy, support of organization leaders, and a provision of education or training, as well as resources (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Hinde, 2004; Meyer, 2010; Peterson and Deal, 1998). The notion of unsupportive or uninterested leaders within an organization can prove detrimental to any school culture change effort. Such a lack of leader support can prove challenging to an organization seeking to change, or shift, its culture even with the other components in place. Additionally, school organizations must allocate sufficient resources including funding, time, and training materials in order for the cultural change effort to be viewed as credible (Meyer, 2010). Yet even with the best support of leaders, delivery of education and training, and provision of ample resources, time becomes an Achilles heel for an organization to cultivate fundamental cultural change.

Existing empirical school culture change research on anti-gay bullying and harassment in public school settings is nearly always focused at the individual level. Chesir-Teran (2003) acknowledged the need to move the focus of empirical research beyond the individual and subsequent victim level and into a school or organizational level (p. 268). Chesir-Teran (2003) called for the need to "study variation between schools more systematically in order to generalize school-level phenomena and to support efforts to promote change" (p. 268). Explication of the school-level conception of LGBT inclusivity instead of perpetuation of the individual-level conception is essential for determining effective policies and strategies to combat institutional discrimination of LGBT youth (Chesir-Teran, 2003). Assessment and related tools for school-level assessment will also yield to effective evaluation of existing school programs and interventions.

Educational policy. As explored through the lens of school culture and change theory related to anti-gay bias, enacting appropriate protective policy serves as a primary agent of school culture change. One means to closely examine and address the issue of the ongoing victimization of LGBT students and the adults obliged to provide an equitable learning environment is through comprehensive public school policy that explicitly addresses bullying and harassment related to anti-gay bias. Research shows that comprehensive public school and district policies that define language to protect sexual minorities, sexual orientation, and gender identity can be effective in combating anti-gay bias, especially bullying and harassment (Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003).

Despite all the supporting data that state that LGBT students are harassed, victimized and face challenges in their learning environment (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; Fetner & Kush, 2008; Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2008; National GLBTQ Youth Foundation, 2010; Mayo, 2006), and despite evidence to support that a school with adult advocates and clear policy that embraces LGBT students is impactful (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Griffin & Ouellett, 2003; Lugg, 2003; Mayo, 2006; Murray, 2011; Rienzo et al., 2006; Roffman, 2000; Wald et al., 2002), the question seemingly begs to be asked is, why are there still school organizations that lack coherent, appropriate, and enforceable policy?

Although anti-discrimination protections and policy have been extended on behalf of many marginalized populations over the last thirty years, such efforts are considered negligible in the scope of protections for sexual minority youth (Murray, 2011), for statistics clearly demonstrate that sexual minority youth are still experiencing an atmosphere of anti-gay bias in schools. Perhaps assumptions are made that school

organizations may fall under local laws or ordinances. Instead, school organizations, which are often run independently from local government, do not typically fall under city or county gay rights ordinances or policies (Button et al., 1997). Yet, within the construct of local government, school organizations serve as the largest and most important entity.

Additionally, historic influences upon LGBT educational policy including the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the 1969 federal hate-crime law, Title IX legislation from 1972, and the Equal Access Act of 1984, have proved to be parsimonious (Lugg, 2003; Murray, 2011). Researchers have attributed the paucity of appropriate legislation and policies for groups such as the sexually marginalized to the nature of the topic being both a controversial subject and one that is debated within a complex public arena (Mayo, 2010; Murray, 2011). As such, part of the difficulty in influencing anti-gay bias in the sector of public education stems from political, historical, legal, and organizational influences (Murray, 2011; Rottmann, 2006).

While the journey for gay rights in schools throughout history seemingly brought LGBT students 'out of the closet' for over a quarter century, in reality, opponents of gay rights and LGBT teachers have commanded the public and legal dialogue (Strauss, 2005). Strauss (2005) declared such actions influenced the American view of schools so that homosexuality seemingly threatened heterosexual students who in turn needed provisions of protection (p. 433). These heteronormative beliefs and actions of the time unfortunately cast an impression of invisibility upon LGBT youth. Any action by schools to provide LGBT youth equal access to educational opportunities were viewed as failures. Doing so acknowledged existence of this marginalized group at a time when it was viewed as inappropriate to do so (Strauss, 2005). Such a delicate dichotomy

epitomizes identity politics such that there becomes an even greater segmentation of groups (Button et al., 1997). Locally, sexual orientation became politically mobilized by its proponents while the opponents divided the call for equal access and protection while leveraging religious identity (Button et al., 1997).

There is a widespread belief that equality and opportunity can be gained through the function of laws (Button et al., 1997). It has been demonstrated that legal codes have the ability to influence entrenched attitudes in areas of society, other than only race (Button et al., 1997). There is power, however, in the perpetuation in the notion of needing policy to safeguard school experience for LGBT students for not only can the law restrain or even restrict behavior of individuals, over time it can impart new beliefs and attitudes among people (Button et al., 1997). This occurs in three ways: first, recognition of LGBT individuals through laws or policies creates more widespread social acceptance; second, with seemingly more widespread social acceptance under law, LGBT individuals will confidently become more visible within society; and third, focusing upon laws and rights of individuals is politically congruent with the present dialogue on behalf of LGBT individuals within America (Button et al., 1997).

Strauss (2005) projects that much can be learned about the discrimination of marginalized populations by examining the history leading up to Brown v. Board of Education (p. 425). Partly due to the actions of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and social scientists, the effects of discrimination throughout school organizations when examining the opportunities for educational equality were underscored (Strauss, 2005). Strauss likens the paramount legacy that Brown has made upon equal educational opportunities to that of the current struggles on

behalf of LGBT students (2005, p. 425).

Examination of literature by previous researchers disputes Strauss' claims (Button et al., 1997; Lipkin, 1999). Lipkin stated that "although heterosexism is fundamentally linked to sexism and has some features in common with racism and religious intolerance, the oppressions are not the same" (1999, p. 237). There may be elements of similar experiences shared among marginalized groups that may appease some, yet the result may be an incited anger by the association of all bigotry, or a capitulation of hierarchical oppression (Lipkin, 1999). Educators may have some compulsion to use race as an analogous concept, but are cautioned to restrain from doing so. Lipkin refers to such a comparison as "pimping on my pain" (1999, p. 238). Unlike Strauss' parallels drawn as a means to bring educators into a familiar proclivity, Lipkin instead offers for educators to help students find similarities among qualities that truly exist (1999).

In the same manner Strauss drew upon similarities from Brown v. Board of Education, Button et al. (1997) give credit to the success of the black civil rights movement throughout the 1950's and 1960's as a means to impart that law is about social change (p. 10). Although the argument linking the civil rights movement with equality on behalf of LGBT persons is acknowledged, Button et al. provide two rationales for why the argument is flawed (1997, p. 12). First, a person's sexual orientation is not visible, whereas one's race is visible. Second, a person's sexual orientation is viewed by some as a behavior characteristic, whereas race is not. Button et al. (1997) reminds readers that throughout history "law has commonly employed as an instrument of oppression, not liberation" (p. 13); therefore, it should not be viewed as the panacea of emancipation for the LGBT community.

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Educational policy has a direct influence upon school culture. Biegel and Kuehl (2010) assert that a key policy recommendation surrounding school climate for LGBT student safety is to "adopt proactive school climate initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to inclusive policies and shared values within our pluralistic society" (p. 2). Policy protections for LGBT youth have captured the attention of many professional organizations, including the U.S. Department of Education, National Association of Attorneys General, National Education Association, American Psychological Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, and the American School Health Association (Elze, 2003). Despite the endorsement by so many professional organizations, Macgillivray (2004a) calls for the need of school organizations and society to better understand the complex process of school policy, specifically surrounding LGBT issues, to be both promoted and implemented, and at times, resisted by communities (p. 348). Researchers align the existence of appropriate school policy as a driving force in changing school culture for LGBT students (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Elze, 2003; Hinde, 2004; Macgillivray, 2004a; Meyer, 2010; National School Boards Association, 2004; Rienzo et al., 2006; Wald et al., 2002).

Rules are often the scapegoat upon which school leaders force an illusion of compliance. Although anti-gay bullying and harassment policy prohibitions are useful, they cannot be relied upon as an effective impetus to impart change in one's beliefs or actions (Lipkin, 1999). Merely being published in district policy documentation and within student handbooks policies themselves may have limited effect upon and organization, and most certainly upon students, unless there has been provision for substantial influence or involvement throughout the process (Lipkin, 1999). Policies and

handbooks can establish a tone, but alone they do not intrinsically change behavior.

Chesir-Teran (2003) identifies variations of heterosexism in schools, including policy, in four distinct ways (p. 269). First, there is variation in those antidiscrimination and harassment policies that include sexual orientation as well as the levels to which the policies are enforced in schools. Second, there is variation in levels of counseling that is affirming, as well as the presence (or magnitude) of support groups for LGBT students in schools. Third, there is variation across schools in the presence of student-initiated groups as well as student-run groups that can positively influence the culture for LGBT issues. Fourth, there is variation in the availability of books written by, or about, LGBT individuals in the school libraries.

Almost 20 years ago, Button et al. conducted case study research specifically seeking policy related to anti-gay bullying and harassment and subsequently received results from a national survey indicating that there existed a dearth of policy protections and program offerings related to student's needs surrounding sexual orientation (Button et al., 1997). It was also found than one third of all districts studied offered any type of professional development training on the topic of sexual orientation to staff within the preceding five-year period (Button et al., 1997). Even more alarming was that fewer than one quarter of all districts studied had an existing anti-gay bullying and harassment policy in place (Button et al., 1997).

The findings by Button et al. are not uncommon. Among the literature sources examined for this study, many scholars, professional organizations, research firms, and authors called for similar strategies to be employed to improve the experience of LGBT students in schools. Table 2 below delineates the top five most frequent strategy

Table 2: *Frequency of anti-gay harassment recommendations across sources*

Frequency Ranking	Recommendation	Sources
12	Implement protective policies within the organization	Biegel, 2010 Biegel & Kuehl, 2010 Button et al., 1997 Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003 Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2012 Lugg, 2003 Macgillivray, 2007 Meyer, 2007 Roffman, 2000 Szalacha, 2003 Strauss, 2005 vanWormer & McKinney, 2003
9	Provision of training for faculty and staff	Button et al., 1997 Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003 Ctrs. for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011 Lugg, 2003 Macgillivray, 2007 Meyer, 2007 Szalacha, 2003 Strauss, 2005 vanWormer & McKinney, 2003
8	Improve school culture/create a welcoming, safe, equitable school climate	Biegel, 2010 Biegel & Kuehl, 2010 Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003 Ctrs. for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011 Lipkin, 1999 Lugg, 2003 Mayo, 2007 vanWormer & McKinney, 2003
8	Implement student support programs to combat anti-gay harassment such as GSA's	Biegel, 2010 Button et al., 1997 Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003 Ctrs. for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011 Lugg, 2003 Szalacha, 2003 Strauss, 2005 vanWormer & McKinney, 2003
7	Familiarize oneself about LGBT people and about homophobia	Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003 Lipkin, 1999 Lugg, 2003 Macgillivray, 2007 Mayo, 2007 Meyer, 2007 vanWormer & McKinney, 2003

recommendations by source. The number reflected in the left column indicates the number of times a strategy to combat anti-gay harassment and bullying was mentioned in the sources reviewed for this dissertation. The most common recommendations were: (a) implementation of protective policies, (b) provision of staff training, (c) improved organizational culture, (d) implement student support programs such as gay-straight alliances (GSA's), and (e) familiarize oneself about LGBT people and homophobia.

LGBT School Experience Factors Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 reveals how the school experiences of LGBT students are directly impacted by social norms and school culture. Social norms, although directly impacting the school experience of LGBT students, are perpetuated through the influence of three factors. First, social norms are perpetuated through the influence of students who unwillingly conform to expected behavior. Second, social norms predict expected behavior of a given community. Third, the behavior of individuals within a given community is viewed as 'undesirable' when it does not match the expected social norm. Each of the factors is no less important than the other; furthermore, the factors sometimes influence social norms in concert with one another. The left columnar representation displays the influence of each of the three factors perpetuating social norms upon the LGBT student school experience as being equally important and co-influential through both a dotted arrow and brackets respectively.

The second component of Figure 1 represents the impact of school culture upon the school experience of LGBT students. School culture is impacted by three distinct factors. First, school policy change efforts (or lack thereof) directly influence school culture. Second, school leaders directly influence school culture. Third, teachers and

Figure 1: *LGBT School Experience Factors Conceptual Framework*
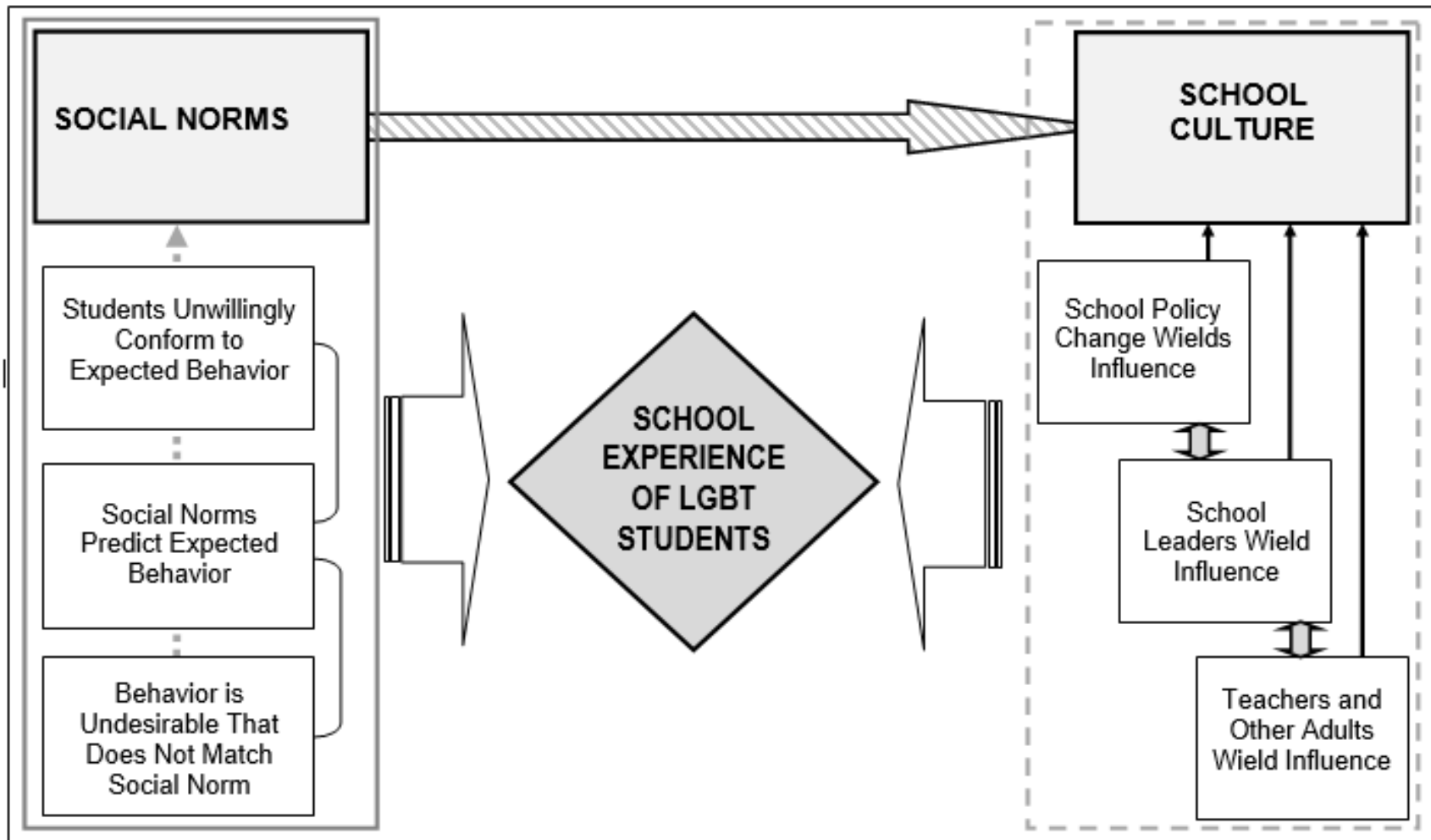
other adults also influence school culture. In the right columnar representation the solid single-end arrows show that each factor directly influences school culture. The small, double-end arrows show that one factor has relative influence upon its adjacent factors.

Figure 1 contains the social norms impact within a box bordered by a solid line as they are seemingly bounded by pre-established rules and expectations. Alternately, the school culture impact is bordered by a dashed line indicating it is more susceptible to outside influences. Both boxes seemingly 'push' their influence onto the school experience of LGBT students. Lastly, social norms directly influence school culture but are not necessarily impacted by the other as shown by the top arrow. The two columnar impacts of social norms and school culture are relatively matched in size, which can be construed as being 'equal' in impact. In fact, they are not. The relative weight of impact of social norms or school culture upon the school experience of LGBT students will be less or more in a given context, and different for each school organization.

Conclusion

The issue of ongoing LGBT harassment and bullying in public schools, the influence of social norms upon student behavior, the role of school culture and change, and educational policy in shaping schools' reactions to the needs of sexual minority students have each been explicated in the previous two sections of this literature review. Statistics disclosing perceptions of student safety, acts of bullying and harassment, poorly designed and implemented policy at the state and local levels, and incidents of adults being unresponsive on behalf of sexual minority students are prevalent throughout the literature.

Sears (1992) calls for an extension of resistance theory by future research to better

understand the lives of LGBT students (p. 155). To positively impact the school

experience of LGBT youth their plight must become a focus of researchers and

evaluators alike. It has been made clear that despite the existence of protective policy at

the state level, there are instances where the same policy protections are not clearly

defined at the local level, if they exist at all. These instances clearly provide opportunities

for research to ask the questions needed to address this misalignment. Local authorities

ought to begin to acknowledge the alarming trends and begin to address the underlying

causes that plague public schools surrounding sexual minority students. Clearly,

perpetuating the status quo and to not act with immediacy is unacceptable.

Chapter 3

Methods

This dissertation sought to discover how policies influence a culture of inclusivity for LGBT students at both the district and site levels. It focused on the role of the school leader in shaping school culture for the inclusion and protection of LGBT students. The resulting data explicated the extent to which school organizations across the state of Minnesota engendered a system that embraced LGBT protections through inclusive language in policy and the extent to which leaders were aware of their current models for inclusion and protection of LGBT students. These data provide a foundation for LGBT cultural awareness across Minnesota public schools, thereby influencing the future work of evaluators, as well as disclosing potential vulnerability to litigation in school organizations.

Rationale for Research Approach

Methodology. The ontological beliefs of critical theory that focus on power and identity struggles undergird the research questions for the study (Creswell, 2013). The critical theory perspective, based on Marxist philosophy, interrogates the social structure of school through which classes of students are preserved at the detriment of others and becomes an "ideological critique of power, privilege, and oppression in areas of educational practice" (Merriam, 2001, p. 4). Sears (1992) states that the use of critical theory allows researchers to "bracket the everyday realities of others" (p. 151). As such, Sears suggests that critical theory allows for the neutralization of others' biases. In this case it was the examination of the lived public school experience of LGBT youth that could be affected by protections set forth in existing school policy.

Qualitative research. Given the purpose of this dissertation, a qualitative methodology discloses a deeper understanding of the current state of school district policy protections for LGBT students across the state of Minnesota. Patton (2002) reminds readers that qualitative research questions often begin with how or what so the researcher will gain an in-depth understanding of what may be going on relative to the topic. Thus, qualitative methodology yields emergent information surrounding the knowledge base of K-12 educational policy for LGBT inclusion.

Assumptions that the world is not merely objective, but instead a function of personal interaction and perception, as well as multiple realities, undergird Merriam's definition of qualitative research (1998). Furthermore, 'reality' is a phenomenon that is highly subjective and in need of interpretation instead of measurement. As such, qualitative methods would elicit multiple viewpoints from interview subjects regarding their awareness and understanding of LGBT inclusion within educational policy. Holding a focus upon "discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspective of those being studied," Merriam (1998) stated that qualitative research offers the "greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education," making it a good choice for this study.

Research Questions and Research Setting/Context

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are Minnesota school districts' written policies regarding LGBT youth?

2. To what extent are the district policies reflected in student handbooks in these districts?

3. What is the perception of local school leaders about their LGBT school policies?

The first question examined the extent to which LGBT students are enumerated and thereby included within policy language and surrounding protections in selected school districts across Minnesota. The anti-bullying and harassment policies of school organizations extoll the most transparent level of commitment to the safety of students in the public eye (Teaching Tolerance, 2013). Existing policies are often found written with implied inclusion for all protected classes; however, numerous scholars have noted that enumeration to specifically include LGBT or sexual orientation in policy language not only provides both clear indication for the scope of policy coverage for students to understand, but also a swath of responsibilities for adults to uphold (Biegel, 2010; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Kozik-Rosabal, 2000; Macgillivray, 2004a; Meyer, 2010). Such enumeration of distinct groups specifies clear protection for those individuals who possess characteristics that may entice bullying behavior (United States Department of Education, 2011). Those protected classes falling beneath such an umbrella include those with disabilities, those of a certain race or ethnicity, gender, and those who identify as LGBT.

The second research question examined the extent to which district policies, including provisions for anti-gay harassment and bullying specific to LGBT students, appeared in school documentation. Researchers conclude that rules and behavior expectations for students surrounding bullying and harassment should be clearly communicated to the student body (Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Macgillivray, 2004a; Stader & Graca, 2007). Still others state that not only should such policies be formally communicated to students, but that school organizations ought to foster discussions among them regarding the meaning behind such policies (Schneider & Owens, 2000).

Therefore, communicating policies to students through handbooks and other school publications is the minimal enforcement of bullying and harassment prevention for LGBT individuals.

The third question addressed the perceptions of local school leaders of their LGBT school policies. Researchers have called upon school administrators to take a leading role in establishing a behavioral baseline for curbing bullying behavior against LGBT students (Biegel, 2010; Chesir-Teran, 2003; Goldstein, Collins, & Halder, 2008; Kozik-Rosabal, 2000; Lipkin, 1999; Meyer, 2010; Riehl, 2000). This is due mainly to the juxtaposition of their relational leadership positions with staff and students. Meyer (2010) contends that although in the vast majority of cases school administrators do not directly cause the egregious acts against LGBT students, their lack of effective action and "invisible scripts of the school" in such incidents of anti-gay harassment and bullying insinuate that sexual minority students are unwelcome (p. 23). The literature makes clear that school leaders inherently serve as role models in this regard and must provide the needed direction to their constituencies.

Chapter Two clearly explicated the baseline for beginning to combat incidents of bullying and harassment of sexual minority students, a movement to begin shifting existing social norms. Changing school culture in this regard fundamentally begins with developing clear policy protections. The three research questions sought to garner a broad overview of the extent to which public school district and public school policy questions across the state served Minnesota LGBT students. The resulting data illuminates the prevalence, school leader awareness, and coverage in primary student documentation of such policies that culminate in the current state of school policy supporting LGBT

students within the state of Minnesota.

The three research questions were explored through document reviews and individual interviews. Table 3 delineates each question guiding this qualitative study, the corresponding research methods, and paradigm. Complete descriptions of each corresponding method are provided in the following pages.

Table 3: *Alignment of methods to research questions*

Research Question	Selected Research Method	Methodological Paradigm
Research Question 1: *What are Minnesota school districts' written policies regarding LGBT youth?*	Document review	Qualitative
Research Question 2: *To what extent are the district policies reflected in student handbooks in these districts?*	Document review	Qualitative
Research Question 3: *What is the perception of local leaders about their LGBT school policies?*	Individual interviews	Qualitative

Research Sample and Data Sources

Sample selection. The sample for this dissertation was drawn across two levels. First, the research was conducted on an eligible sample drawn from all public school districts across the state of Minnesota. Second, a volunteer sample was drawn from administrators across Minnesota's 334 public school districts.

The Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) assisted in communication and access to serving principals during the data collection phase of this research project, a benefit afforded with active membership in the organization. The membership of MASSP includes 98% of all principals serving in a public secondary school in the state. Participants were solicited in partnership with the MASSP through an initial email contact to its respective active membership list requesting volunteer telephone interview subjects for the study.

In all, 1,101 interview invitations were sent, 38 principals responded affirmatively, and, of those, 31 interviews were conducted. The resulting sample included 31 subjects from 29 districts representing each of the MASSP divisions. The remaining 7 were unable to participate due to scheduling constraints. Each volunteer was actively serving in a secondary-level administrative position in a Minnesota public school, with the exception of one recently retired subject. Another subject served not only as the secondary level principal, but also served as the district superintendent.

Males represented nearly two-thirds of the sample, which is unremarkable among secondary school leaders. Lipkin (1999) reminds us that male dominance potentially imparts some general sexist and heterosexist tendencies in part due to a long history of a stereotypical school administrator being somewhat sexist, partly intolerance of women or LGBT individuals, and potentially a historic tendency to dismiss anti-gay bullying or harassing behavior as well (Lipkin, 1999). Surprisingly, two female subjects volunteered that they identified as LGBT. Table 4 provides additional details on the gender distribution of the resulting volunteer sample.

Volunteer subjects represented a broad array of years of experience. To

Table 4: *Volunteer sample gender distribution*

n=31	Count	Percentage
Female	12	39%
Male	19	61%

standardize years of experience, responses were grouped into experience bands based on holding membership in MASSP: (a) one to three years for those who were likely untenured or newly tenured, (b) four to six years for those who were still fresh in their administrative careers, (c) seven to ten years, (d) eleven to fifteen years, and (e) sixteen plus years for those who were likely nearing the end of their administrative careers. Table 5 provides additional details of the experience level of the resulting volunteer sample.

Table 5: *Volunteer sample years of MASSP membership*

n=31	1-3 Yrs.	4-6 Yrs.	7-10 Yrs.	11-15 Yrs.	16+ Yrs.
Female	3	0	3	3	3
Male	1	2	7	6	3
Total	4	2	10	9	6
Overall Percentage	13%	7%	32%	29%	19%

Arrangements were made individually with each volunteer subject to participate in a 15-minute telephone interview at a time that was conducive to the subject's schedule. The line of questioning for subjects who volunteered (refer to Appendix C for interview questions) was well within their job responsibilities as licensed secondary school administrators in the state of Minnesota. Most interviews took place while the subject was in his/her home, office, car, or attending a professional event. Additionally, interview

invitation cards were made available on the registration table at an MASSP professional

event to solicit additional participants. Finally, MASSP staff later sent a reminder email.

Confidentiality was assured throughout the process as no subject was identified by name

in the results; instead, individual responses were identified by MASSP geographical

regions, known as divisions (refer to Figure 2). Following the affirmative responses from

Figure 2: *Minnesota State Map by MASSP Division*
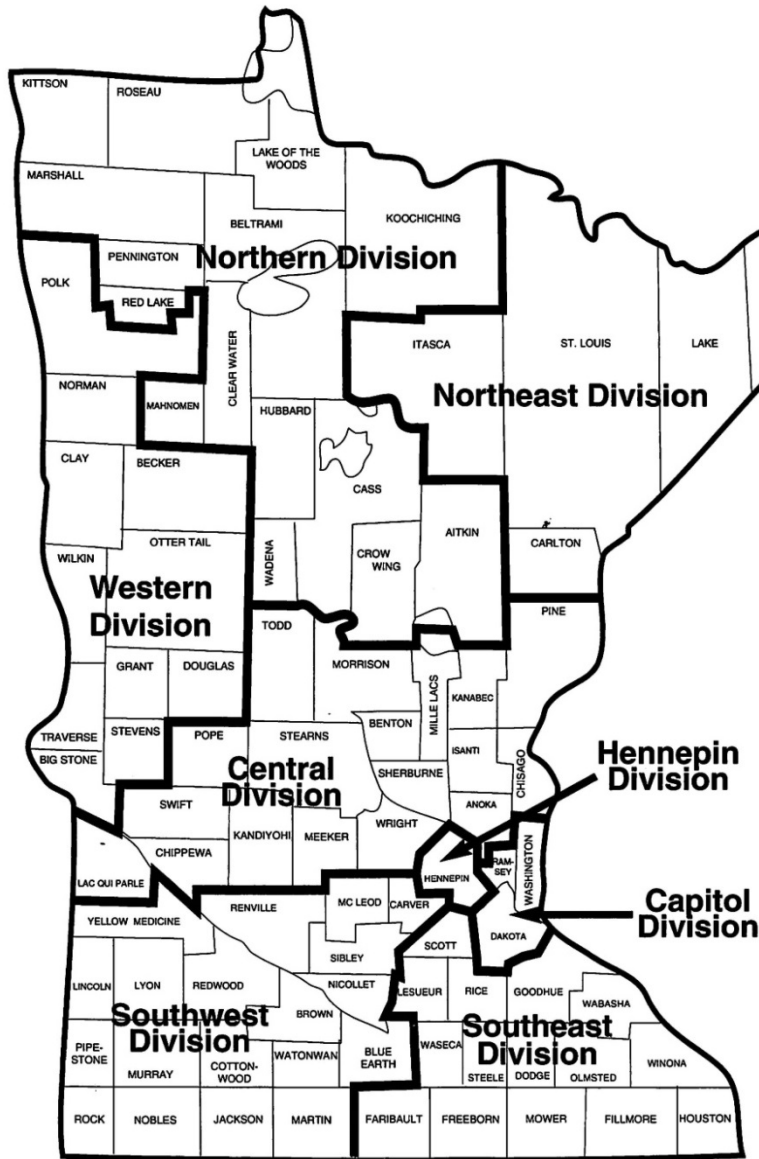
Map obtained from the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals

the initial MASSP email invitation, a consent form was presented to each subject. Signed

consent forms were secured prior to the 15-minute interview and were returned either by

fax, digitally scanned and emailed, or mailed by United States Postal Service delivery.

Depending upon the subject's mode of consent, there were varying amounts of time

between when a subject received the consent form and the time when the interview took

place. Tabulated results were stored using computer flash drives or a password-protected

online cloud storage site. Digital recordings of subjects' telephone interviews, resulting

transcription documents, and subject consent forms were all stored in a similar secure

fashion. All computers and other related electronic devices used by the researcher were

password protected with the latest available encrypted personal network equipment.

Overall, the sample of participants was relatively proportional to the size of their

respective MASSP divisions. It is important to bear in mind, however, that each of the

divisions corresponds to varying geographic regions of Minnesota. The regions

corresponding to each of the MASSP divisions differ vastly in terms of overall

population, demographics, including cultural background and income, as well as

industrial diversity. It is important to also bear in mind that while the fewest number of

active secondary principals are located in the Northern division, there is a limitation in

having only one respondent from that area. Table 6 details the 9% of participating

districts in comparison to the total districts by MASSP division.

Data Collection Procedures

Document review. The document review was achieved through the analysis of

electronic and physical artifacts to uncover the existence and potential application of

district policy. Documents for review included district level policies, as well as secondary

Table 6: *Representation of districts by region*

Division	Total Districts	Sample Districts	Percentage
Capitol	26	4	15%
Central	68	5	7%
Hennepin	35	5	14%
Northeast	30	4	13%
Northern	38	1	3%
Southeast	49	3	6%
Southwest	53	4	8%
Western	35	3	9%
Grand Total:	**334**	**29**	**9%**

school student handbooks that would likely cover anti-gay bullying and harassment

protection of sexual minority students. Documents were procured first through individual

school and district websites as they are required to be posted there. If needed, additional

follow up was made by email or telephone to each district. A structured document review

checklist was developed for use that incorporated standardized items to seek. (See

Appendix D.) Such documents were analyzed in conjunction with the other data

generated throughout the course of the study.

Minnesota legislation directs school districts to enact policies that enumerate by

protected class, including sexual orientation, and that district policy statements are

carried into student handbooks (Minnesota State Revisor, 2014). Refer to Table 7 for a

list of those related district policies that are required by legislation. Although existing

policies are often found written with implied inclusion for all protected classes, it is

important to remember that enumeration to specifically include LGBT or sexual

orientation in policy language not only provides both clear indication for the scope of

policy coverage to which students are held accountable, but also the swath of

responsibility for adults to uphold (Biegel, 2010; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Kozik-

Table 7: *Related district policies required by legislation*

Policy Name	State Statute Requiring Policy
102 Equal Education Opportunity	Minn. Stat. § 121A.56, Subd. 1 (Prohibition Against Discrimination Remains in Effect) Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (MN Human Rights Act)
413 Harassment and Violence Prevention	Minn. Stat. § 121A.03, Subd. 2 (Sexual, Religious, and Racial Harassment and Violence Policy) Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (MN Human Rights Act)
506 Student Discipline (Code of Conduct)	Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (MN Government Data Practices Act) Minn. Stat. § 121A.55 (Policies to be Established – Student Discipline) Includes Minn. Stat. § 121A.40 to 121A.56
514 Bullying	Minn. Stat. § 121A.31 Subd. 3 (School Student Bullying Policy)

Rosabal, 2000; Macgillivray, 2004a; Meyer, 2010).

District policies from each of the 29 districts sampled were reviewed to determine the extent to which policy vernacular enumerated LGBT students. Enumeration values included sexual orientation, sexual preference, LGBT, GLBT, homosexual, and gay (refer to Appendix E for complete checklist matrix). The district policies sought during the document analysis portion of the study included: (a) Anti-Violence and Non-Discrimination, (b) Bullying, (c) Code of Conduct, (d) Equal Educational Opportunity, (e) Equal Employment Opportunity, (f) Harassment and Violence Prevention, and (g) Mission Statement.

In addition to locating the specific policy information listed above, the dates on which specific policies were adopted, reviewed, or changed ought to be considered. Local governing school boards bear responsibility for enacting policy as well as developing a cycle to review policy (National School Boards Association, 2016). The date on which a specific policy was last reviewed or adopted suggests a level of up-to-date congruence with recent changes or requirements by state or federal legislative policy mandates. Over

time, change mandates may not only stem from new policy subjects, but also new terminology that ought to be adopted. To this end policy prevalence as well as most recent policy date was reviewed.

Scholars have concluded that rules and behavior expectations for students surrounding bullying and harassment should be clearly communicated to the student body (Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Macgillivray, 2004b; Stader & Graca, 2007). Therefore, articulation of policy statements surrounding bullying and harassment of LGBT individuals to students through handbooks and other school publications are providing protections for sexual minority youth at the very basic level (Lipkin, 1999). For the purpose of this study, each participant's school handbook would be examined for district policy translation to the student body.

The student handbook publications containing district policy statements also included: (a) Anti-Violence and Non-Discrimination, (b) Bullying, (c) Code of Conduct, (d) Equal Educational Opportunity, (e) Harassment and Violence Prevention, and (f) Mission Statement. In the case of student handbooks, however, Equal Employment Opportunity results were not collected as this particular policy would not be applicable in student-level publications. As in the case of the district policies under research question one, enumeration values for student handbooks included sexual orientation, sexual preference, LGBT, GLBT, homosexual, and gay (refer to Appendix E for complete checklist matrix).

The document review was conducted using the 29 school districts and 30 secondary schools represented by interview subjects. In this manner the two districts with multiple administrators allowed a quasi-member check to be instituted such that the

documentation reviewed either refuted or substantiated the answers interview subjects

provided regarding the state of inclusive policies in their own school organization.

Individual interviews. The individual interview sample was drawn from the

MASSP group list from the 2013-14 school year. A participation request was made via

Survey Monkey of all active members of the secondary school principals association,

which represented 98% of all active secondary school principals and 91% of the public

school districts across the state of Minnesota. The survey invitation alerted potential

participants that the interviews would take place by telephone, would last between 10 and

15 minutes, would be scheduled at participants' convenience, that anonymity was

assured, and that questions would be centered on their knowledge of LGBT policy

protections within their district and school.

Upon email or phone notification of willingness to participate, the researcher sent

an introduction by email to secure a time and phone number for the interview. It was

initially expected that at least 20 individuals would be willing to participate. In the end,

31 individuals participated, thereby exceeding expectations. Volunteer subjects

represented 29 different Minnesota school districts and 30 different secondary schools

despite there being 31 in number.

It is important to bear in mind that two participants were drawn from the same

school district, but different high schools, and two participants were drawn from the same

district and school. Resulting data from the subjects from the same district and different

high schools disclosed the degree of difference in student-level documentation (e.g.,

school student handbook policy provisions) without a difference in district-level policy

language. Similarly, the resulting data from the subjects from the same district and same

high school disclosed the degree to which the personal knowledge level and familiarity came to play with respect to both student-level documentation as well as district-level policy language. Such inclusion of subjects allowed exploratory content to emerge from the data, including a quasi-member check.

The individual interview questioning route focused on local policy knowledge. (See Appendix C.) Initial development of the interview questioning instrument was inspired by existing models (i.e., Biegel, 2010; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2012; Macgillivray, 2004b; Roffman, 2000; Szalacha, 2003). Two pilot interviews were conducted using the resulting instrument with individuals sharing knowledge and characteristics of the potential participants. After each pilot interview, the questions on the instrument were refined with rewording and re-sequencing. Additionally, questions surrounding potential subjects' knowledge of the bullying incident and subsequent lawsuit in Anoka-Hennepin and any related policy actions borne out of local awareness of the Anoka-Hennepin case were included. The addition of these questions may have helped confirm whether subjects somehow used the penalties imposed upon a nearby district as an impetus for organizational self-reflection.

Subject responses were recorded digitally in addition to observations noted by the interviewer. Each participant was presented a consent form electronically, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the process. (See Appendix A.) Steps taken to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents included assigning an alias name or number to each respondent requesting such, presenting the consent form that explained to participants that they had been selected to participate in the study, and minimizing "off

the record" conversations. The only identification of individual interview data in reports was by subjects' MASSP division.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis. Resulting interview transcripts were analyzed in conjunction with the other data generated throughout the course of the study. To this end, when each of the 31 subjects was interviewed, a digital recording was generated from the entire conversation. Each of the digital recordings was then transcribed into Microsoft Word 2010 by Verbalink Transcription Services. Next, each transcription document was loaded into Nvivo 10 in preparation for the coding phase of data analysis, which was completed in partnership with Evaluation Partners, LLC. Then, in a final step of coding preparation, a coding matrix was developed to associate each of the 8 interview questions to one or more of the three corresponding research questions. Additional information regarding the interview question coding rubric can be found in Table 8 below.

Table 8: *Rubric for coding criteria.*

Interview Question	Coding Criteria	
Interview Question 1: *Tell me what you know about your policies for LGBT students.*	**Knowledgeable**	Easily responds whether organization has related policy, is able to articulate deeper information such as when organization put such a policy in place, relates specific events to the policy, and/or deeply discusses additional work within organization on behalf of LGBT students.
	Aware policy exists	Easily responds whether organization has related policy, or not.
	Unaware/Uncertain	Responds with peripheral knowledge, is unsure of terminology and needs additional prompts, really does not understand the question and/or whether organization has such a policy.

Response themes were established with a clear intent to comprehensively link the emerging themes to the larger research questions. In most cases, interview questions were

Table 9: *Research and interview question coding matrix*

Research Questions	Child/Grandchild Nodes	Interview Questions

Research Question 1:
 	
What are Minnesota school districts' written policies regarding LGBT youth?
	1) Level of policy knowledge.
	  a. Knowledgeable
	  b. Aware that a policy exists
	  c. Unaware/uncertain
		Interview Question 1:
		
		Tell me what you know about your policies for LGBT students.

	1) Level of policy specificity.
	  a. Specified LGBT as protected class
	  b. Umbrella, or, "all students"
		Interview Question 3:
		
		Do you have a policy at the district level? Explain.

Research Question 2:
 	
To what extent are the district policies reflected in student handbooks in these districts?
	1) Are district policies reflected in building publications?
	  a. Yes – Level of specificity
	    i. Verbatim
	    ii. Modified language
	  b. No
		Interview Question 6:
		
		Does your district policy show up in your building policy publications such as your student handbook? Explain.

	2) Where do policies appear in building publications?
	  a. Student handbook
	  b. Student handbook and website	

Research Question 3:
 	
What is the perception of local leaders about their LGBT school policies?
	1) Did school leaders discuss Anoka Hennepin?
	  a. Yes, discussed
	    i. Informal discussion
	    ii. Formal discussion
	    iii. Both, formal and informal discussion
	  b. No
		Interview Question 2:
		
		Did school leaders within your organization discuss what happened to Anoka-Hennepin following the results of their lawsuit? Explain.

	2) Did Anoka Hennepin have impact on interest for policy?
	  a. Yes, made impact
	  b. No, did not make impact
		Interview Question 5:
		
		Do you believe what happened to Anoka-Hennepin made any impact on your organization's interest in having policies for LGBT students? Explain.

	3) Beyond Policy:
	  a. Policy alone won't change issue
	  b. Resources provided
	  c. Supportive of LGBT faculty
	  d. Trainings provided
	  e. Transgender awareness
		Interview Question 8:
		
		Is there anything else you wish to share about policy or treatment of LGBT students?

asked in such a way that a clear, concise response would emerge; however, interview questions 1 and 8 were posed broadly to solicit an overall knowledge base from the respondent. A rubric was developed for question 1 to distinguish degrees of subject responses across coding criteria. Additional details can be found in Table 9 on the previous page. Question 8 fostered a variety of responses from which themes and frequencies would flow. Finally, interrelations between themes were explored using the matrix query function within Nvivo as well as respondent characteristics.

Managing Positionality

Researchers aware of potential political implications that may emerge from their study must give strong consideration to the theoretical assumptions that undergird their study (Sears, 1992). Similarly, those potentially politically-charged communities to which the researcher has an existing association must also be considered. It is then necessary for me to disclose that I am an openly homosexual educator who is passionate about the success for all students, including those who are LGBT. Sears (1992) discusses whether a homosexual can conduct research on a subject steeped in homosexuality (p. 149). Yet he reminds us that "before being a researcher, a person is first a member of a particular culture" (1992, p. 149). It is therefore my capacity to be empathetic that is the test throughout this study, not my ability to remain "objective" as my culture as a homosexual has shaped my view of the world (Sears, 1992).

Peshkin (1988) stated that throughout the course of a study, researchers should systematically identify their subjectivity. Additionally, it is necessary for me to disclose that I am licensed school administrator with over 16 years of experience as a building administrator and district-level administrator. Currently, I am employed with a

technology consortium exclusively serving approximately 150 K-12 school organizations across the state of Minnesota. My position continues to require school administration experience and licensure since I am interfacing directly with school and district leaders at regular intervals. Therefore, with my extensive administrative experience, I not only bring a certain level of subjectivity having great familiarity with the topic of policy, but I conversely bring a sense of trustworthiness due to shared experiences with the interview subjects on work history, academic training, and shared knowledge.

Peshkin refers to two different ways of knowing: first, learning, and second, experiencing (Peshkin, 1994). He also states, regarding his subjectivity, "…that under no circumstance can I shed it" (1994, p. 47). Peshkin purports that one's own experiences influence not only one's lens for conducting the research, but also one's choices for why particular topics are selected, the research and analysis methods employed, and conclusions drawn. The commitment by a researcher to a given topic, Peshkin states, discloses not only what matters to a researcher, but also the degree to which the given topic matters (1994, p. 50). This subjectivity shapes not only what conclusions a researcher draws, but also those not drawn (Peshkin, 1994).

My dual subjectivity within this research project can be mitigated by a process delineated by Peshkin (1988). Peshkin called for prospective researchers to employ a process known as a *subjectivity audit* (1988, p. 18). The audit requires the researcher to first reflect deeply upon what internal and external qualities and characteristics link oneself to the research subject. Next, such an audit requires the researcher to record each time an internal subjectivity quality is provoked, while being certain to link the provocation point to the potentially subjective quality. For me the internal and external

qualities were my sexual orientation, my previous employment experience as a school district administrator, and current employment experience as a technology leader of school-level leaders.

To systematically monitor my level of subjectivity through the audit, I leveraged observation notes as a means to record times that I noticed my subjectivity surfacing. I would enter data into a spreadsheet under the category of subjectivity. Each entry was systematic in nature and included the place, time, and names of any individuals who might be present. I also made note of any emerging feelings, gut reactions, and thought patterns that might also extend from the event. It is Peshkin's subjectivity audit that instructed me to purposively notate "the warm and the cool spots, the emergence of positive and negative feelings, the experiences I wanted more of or wanted to avoid, and when I [feel] moved to act in roles beyond those necessary to fulfill my research needs" (1988, p. 18). I utilized the same audit strategies when feelings surrounding my sexual orientation were evoked.

Limitations

This research study was limited in two ways. The first limitation was with regard to participants and sample size. The subject sample size was small in comparison to the entire number of serving secondary administrators throughout Minnesota (31 volunteers compared to 1,123 total MASSP members). This limitation is potentially confounding due to the participants all representing one single state. Subjects were exclusively volunteers, which might make the data have a propensity to be over-representative of individuals highly motivated to speak on behalf of LGBT or highly motivated to speak against LGBT. There may also be some residual doubt as to whether all participants were

entirely truthful and open in their responses due to the potentially sensitive topic.

It should also be noted that volunteer subjects were representative of one state. Responses from another state may have been different, including the presence of LGBT among protected class groups and whether the same would be required by another state's legislation. Furthermore, the regional differences within the state of Minnesota alone would yield economic, cultural, and religious differences in addition to potentially different levels of progressivism across the state.

Related to the small number of volunteer participants is the likelihood that some of the subjects may be in a new position as a result of leadership changes within their organizations. This likely limited the participant's understanding and immediate knowledge of organizational policies that would represent LGBT youth. It is also possible the questioning line might not completely account for subject knowledge limitations in order to solicit a "good" answer.

A second limitation concerned the data generated from both the document reviews. Documents at the school board level may not have been entirely accurate. Each policy document contained revision dates, yet it is likely some of the policy documents at the board level may not have been updated. Furthermore, the actions from listed policy dates were not entirely discernable whether a policy may have been reviewed, revised or adapted. Additionally, the availability of model policies (to be described in greater detail in Chapter Four) by the MASSP and Minnesota Department of Education may have been adopted by some of the local boards without full knowledge of the requirements or implications.

Conclusion

Using a methodological framework grounded in critical theory, three research questions focusing on school policy were explored using a volunteer sample of Minnesota school district leaders drawn from a list of MASSP membership. Participants were not identified by name or district as they were assured of confidentiality; the means for identifying their results was solely by their MASSP division.

As a homosexual licensed school administrator, I had to take additional steps to ensure that any subjectivity entering into the research process was mitigated to the greatest degree. Each time feelings of discomfort, disbelief, or at times anger, were stirred, I was careful to record the instance as an observation note. Additionally, as a school administrator I had to make additional efforts to ensure that I was remaining as objective as possible throughout the entire process without jumping to conclusions or making connections without accurate data to substantiate the decisions.

Steps were taken to ensure accuracy in recording the interviews by using a digital recorder, then using a professional transcription service to ensure each participant's responses were verbatim. Likewise, steps were taken to ensure accuracy in analysis of the interview data using Nvivo such that a professional evaluation firm was used for the purpose of beginning the project with the initial source coding. These steps in combination reduced any questions of reliability.

The care and preparation taken in advance of commencing the research hopefully provide a sense of confidence that the results will also be presented in a highly accurate and thoughtful manner. The following chapter details the results and draws conclusions.

Chapter 4

Results

The school leader's role in shaping school culture for the inclusion and protection of LGBT students is at the foundation of this dissertation. Results from the interviews indicate how the perceptions of leaders surrounding specific district policy statements engendered a culture of inclusivity for LGBT students at both the site and district levels. The degree to which school organizations fostered a culture that embraced sexual minority individuals through the enumeration of LGBT individuals as a protected class within district policy, as well as through the enumeration of LGBT within district policy statements appearing in student-level publications, were disclosed as a result of the data emanating from this study. Furthermore, the impact a Minnesota district's lawsuit had upon leaders' interests in establishing a clear policy for sexual minority individuals was explored. Although not directly emanating from the third research question, subjects' responses illuminated whether the consequences of regional colleagues led to any sense of urgency to have a better understanding of their own situations, thereby adding context for future research surrounding leaders' perceptions. As an outcome of this study, when asked to evaluate policy, as well as social or cultural aspects of school organizations, evaluators will have a new baseline understanding of the current policy conditions for LGBT individuals in the state of Minnesota.

The research findings are grouped by data collection method. Leading the research findings are results from the document review. Within the framework of the first research question, district-level policies uncovered the extent to which LGBT students were enumerated as a protected class within policy language documenting a baseline of

Minnesota district written policies. The second research question, which addressed results from the school-level policy statements, disclosed to what extent district-level policy was presented to students across the secondary schools that participated. Lastly, the third research question, which elicited leader perceptions about their current policies, formed a baseline understanding of the depth of knowledge leaders had surrounding their current policies applicable to LGBT individuals at both the district and school levels.

Following the document review findings, results from the principal interviews are presented. First, under the umbrella of the first research question, school leaders disclosed their depth of knowledge surrounding policies that included LGBT individuals within their school organizations. Second, within the context of the second research question, school leaders responded to the prevalence of existing district policy statements contained in school-level documentation at sampled secondary schools. Last, perceptual results for the third research question emerged as a comparison was drawn between a district's inclusion of LGBT protected class enumeration within district-level policies and the inclusion of LGBT enumeration within school-level documentation policy statements that were placed in the hands of students. Furthermore, leaders' responses to additional interview questions intimated an impact the Anoka-Hennepin School District lawsuit may have had upon their own desire to examine LGBT policy in their organizations.

Findings

Document Review

The first question, "What are Minnesota school districts' written policies regarding LGBT youth?" disclosed the extent to which LGBT students were enumerated, and thereby included, within policy language and surrounding protections in school

districts across Minnesota. Of the 334 Minnesota districts, 29 districts emerged as the

research sample from the volunteers. Refer to Table 10 that details the prevalence of each

policy in district documentation and to Table 11 that details the enumeration of LGBT

within district policy documents.

Table 10: *Prevalence of policies examined at the district level*

n=29	District Count	Percentage
Bullying	29	100%
Equal Educational Opportunity	29	100%
Harassment and Violence Prevention	29	100%
Equal Employment Opportunity	28	97%
Code of Conduct	27	93%
Anti-Violence/Non-Discrimination	26	90%

Table 11: *Policies including enumeration of LGBT at the district level*

n=29	District Count	Percentage
Equal Educational Opportunity	29	100%
Harassment and Violence Prevention	26	90%
Equal Employment Opportunity	26	90%
Code of Conduct	21	72%
Anti-Violence/Non-Discrimination	19	66%
Bullying	11	38%

Mission statements were reviewed for all districts sampled with the expectation

that there would be language found that would somehow encompass all protected classes

to which the mission statement applied. What was found, however, was that among those

districts sampled, no mission statement was so detailed that there was delineation by any

protected class. Mission statements tended to be comprised of broad statements that were

not at all definitive as to whom might be covered by them. Thus, the existence of LGBT

individuals within district mission statements was not included within the document

review results.

The district level Equal Educational Opportunity policy from all 29 districts that were part of the sample included clear enumeration of LGBT students. This was the only consistent policy at both the district or school level with universal inclusion of LGBT students within the policy language. Twenty-eight of all cases used the term *sexual orientation*. In only one case was the older terminology of *sexual preference* used instead. The earliest Equal Educational Opportunity district policy revision on record was from 1999, while the most recent were either adopted or adapted in 2014. (Refer to Table 12 for additional details.)

Table 12: *Dates of policy review, revision, or adaptations*

	Earliest Date	**Latest Date**	**MASSP ***
Anti-Violence and Non-Discrimination – Policy 525	1998	2013	2012
Bullying – Policy 514	2006	2014	2014
Code of Conduct – Policy 506	1998	2014	2013
Equal Educational Opportunity – Policy 102	1999	2014	1999
Equal Employment Opportunity – Policy 401	1991	2014	2008
Harassment and Violence Prevention – Policy 413	1989	2014	2005

* Corresponding MASSP Model Policy was changed during year listed.

The second most prevalent policies reflected at the district level were Equal Employment Opportunity and Harassment and Violence Prevention. Enumeration of LGBT individuals was missing from these policies in three districts, with only one

district missing both. The earliest Equal Employment Opportunity policy revision on record was from 1991, while the most recent were either adopted or adapted in 2014. The earliest Harassment and Violence Prevention policy revision on record was from 1989, while the most recent was from 2014.

The district policy with the greatest number of districts missing enumeration of LGBT students was the policy for Bullying. Despite having Bullying policies at all 29 participating districts, twenty of the 29 district level Bullying policies did not include any convention of sexual minority youth enumeration within the policy language. The earliest Bullying policy revision on record was from 2006, while the most recent were either adopted or adapted in 2014.

The district policy with the penultimate number of districts missing enumeration of LGBT students was the policy for Anti-Violence and Non-Discrimination. Eighteen of the 29 district level policies lacked any convention of sexual minority youth enumeration within the policy language. The earliest Anti-Violence and Non-Discrimination policy revision on record was from 1998, while the most recent were either adopted or adapted in 2013.

While the anti-violence and non-discrimination policies were missing LGBT enumeration across many of the participating districts, the results may be confounded. In several instances districts combined both the Harassment and Non-Violence Prevention policy into the Anti-Violence and Non-Discrimination policy. (In short, instead of two policies, districts had one that was a combination.) In nearly all cases this was noted within the policy language, which was reflected in the observation notes collected throughout the course of this study, thus allowing for accurate interpretation of results.

There may be some cases, however, the language was not always clear when the policy was present, at which time I gave them credit, and therefore I may have counted this policy inaccurately.

The average number of policies by district that enumerated LGBT individuals as a protected class group within district-level policy language varied across school organizations. The largest concentration was the 14 districts that enumerated LGBT individuals in four of the six district policies examined. The smallest concentration of districts was the one district that enumerated LGBT individuals in only two of the six district policies examined. There were no instances of districts that lacked enumeration in all six policies studied, nor were there instances of districts with only one policy reflecting enumeration of LGBT students as a protected class. (Refer to Table 13 for additional details.)

Table 13: *Percentage of districts enumerating LGBT individuals as a protected class group within district-policy language*

n=29	District Count	Percentage
Six policies	4	14%
Five policies	6	21%
Four policies	14	48%
Three policies	4	14%
Two policies	1	3%
One policy	0	0%
Zero policies	0	0%

Overall, every district had two or more policies that enumerated LGBT students. This may be partly attributable to the fact that many respondents credited their seemingly progressive policy statements to the boilerplate model policies put forth by the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA). Twenty-one out of 29 districts included MSBA citations on the printed district policies. The number of districts with enumerated policy

statements required by legislation suggests that district leaders have had an interest being in compliance of legislative requirements. The MSBA model policies included the enumeration of LGBT in 5 out of the 6 policies. Only the MSBA Anti-Violence and Non-Discrimination model policy lacked the enumeration of LGBT individuals, which may be attributable to the fact that it is not a policy required by legislation.

The second research question, "To what extent are the district policies reflected in student handbooks in these districts?" uncovered the extent to which district policy statements, including provisions for anti-gay harassment and bullying specific to LGBT students, appeared in school-level documentation. As the following information will disclose, the carryover of district-level policy statements enumerating LGBT students into building policy statements in publications such as student handbooks, however, was greatly reduced from the prevalence in district-level publications. This occurred despite a clear directive from legislative statute for district policy statements to be carried into student handbooks (Minnesota State Revisor, 2014).

Documents reviewed for research question two included secondary school student handbooks, which likely covered anti-gay bullying and harassment protections of sexual minority students. Student handbooks are the student-level publication in which district policies are reproduced for the student body. In most cases, such handbooks are developed by the schools; in a few cases they are developed on a district basis. Most handbooks solicited for review were in electronic form made available on the district websites. In all cases, the handbook representing the 2013-14 school year was used for analysis. There were a couple of instances, however, where requests were made to district office personnel to obtain the correct version. (Refer to Table 14 for additional details.)

Table 14: *Percentage of school handbooks including enumeration of LGBT*

n=30	School Count	Percentage
Equal Educational Opportunity	14	47%
Harassment/Non-Violence Prevention	10	33%
Anti-Violence/Non-Discrimination	6	20%
Code of Conduct	2	7%
Bullying	2	7%

As was the case at the district level, the Equal Educational Opportunity policy statement with LGBT individuals enumerated most frequently appeared in documentation at the school level. Fourteen of the 30 secondary schools included this enumerated policy statement in their student handbook. Similar to the district-level documents, the second most prevalent policy statement reflected in school-level documents was Harassment and Violence Prevention. Ten of the 30 secondary schools included this enumerated policy statement in their student handbook. (Readers should be reminded of the volunteer sample in that there were 31 secondary principals interviewed who represented 30 different secondary schools across 29 different school districts.)

The district policy statements with the greatest number of school-level publications missing enumeration of LGBT students were the Bullying policy and the Code of Conduct policy. Twenty-eight of the 30 student handbooks lacked any mention of LGBT youth enumeration within the district Bullying policy and Code of Conduct policy statement language. There were many instances in which districts clearly listed LGBT individuals as a protected class group in district-level policies. Yet in the school-level publications, LGBT students were omitted from district policy statements. Additionally, there were some cases in which districts included LGBT individuals in district level policy; while in the student-level publications, the policy statement was not

listed at all. Table 15 presents additional details.

Table 15: *Percentage of districts enumerating LGBT only at district policy level*

n=29	District Count	Percentage
Code of Conduct	18	62%
Harassment/Non-Violence Prevention	18	62%
Equal Educational Opportunity	11	38%
Bullying	8	28%
Anti-Violence/Non-Discrimination	3	10%

The average number of student publications that enumerated LGBT individuals as a protected class group within district-level policy language varied across secondary schools. The largest concentration of secondary schools was the 13 schools in which the student handbook enumerated LGBT individuals in only one of the five district policy statements examined. The next largest concentration of schools was the ten schools in which the student handbook enumerated LGBT individuals in none of the five district policy statements. The smallest concentration of secondary schools was the one school that enumerated LGBT individuals in four of the five district policy statements reviewed. No district enumerated across all five policies areas studied. Refer to Table 16 for additional details.

Table 16: *Percentage of schools enumerating LGBT individuals as a protected class group within student handbook policy language*

n=30	School Count
Five policies	0%
Four policies	3%
Three policies	10%
Two policies	10%
One policy	43%
Zero policies	34%

The document review revealed two significant trends. First, district-level policies enumerating LGBT individuals as a protected class were prevalent. The policy with the fewest number of districts including LGBT among the listed protected classes was Bullying. This low incidence may be partly attributable to the fact that the Minnesota legislature and governor recently brought revised anti-bullying legislation forward with hopes that schools would soon embrace new policy language (Post, 2012).

Second, LGBT enumeration in district policy statements appearing in school-level documents such as student handbooks, however, was not as prevalent. This may be a direct result of leaders' desire for brevity in student handbook length—perhaps out of a desire to lower printing costs or perhaps out of a desire to put district-policy statements into more 'kid-friendly' language. Nonetheless, this clearly belies the edict from Minnesota State Statute 121A.03 Model Policy Subd. 2, which stipulates that not only must certain policies be posted around the school, but also must be "*included in each school's student handbook on school policies*" (Minnesota State Revisor, 2014, emphasis added). Refer to Table 17 comparing percentages of districts and schools enumerating LGBT individuals within policy documents.

Table 17: *Comparison of district and school percentage of policy documents enumerating LGBT individuals as a protected class*

n=30	District Percentage	School Percentage
Anti-Violence/Non-Discrimination	66%	20%
Bullying	38%	7%
Code of Conduct	72%	7%
Equal Educational Opportunity	100%	47%
Equal Employment Opportunity	90%	NA
Harassment/Non-Violence Prevention	90%	33%

Interviews

Interview subjects were asked a series of eight questions to elicit responses to the three research questions. Subjects were first asked about their level of knowledge regarding LGBT district policies. Because interview questions were aligned to the broader research questions, the first question, "What are Minnesota school districts' written policies regarding LGBT youth?" evoked responses from participants from interview question 1, "Tell me what you know about your policies for LGBT students," and question 3, "Do you have a policy at the district level?" Such responses exposed the level of knowledge school leaders held about the extent to which LGBT students were

Table 18: *Level of knowledge of district policies*

n=31	Response Count	Sample Quotations
Unaware/uncertain	8	*"Um, gay and lesbians who you're referring to? Right, so, we have all three. Well, just our standard policies about discrimination. I think they all apply. I mean discrimination by ethnicity, or gender, or whatever is forbidden."* *- Southeast Division Member* *"Hmm, don't know if we have any specific to LGBT – we really haven't had any issues – "* *- Southwest Division Member*
Aware that a policy exists	13	*"Specifically for LGBT students, I am not aware of any specific policies. However, we do have a comprehensive harassment and bullying policy, which includes race, religion, sexual orientation."* *- Southwest Division Member* *To my knowledge, there is nothing specific in policy in regard to specifically LGBT.* *- Northeast Division Member*
Knowledgeable	10	*"We have specific policies in place for sexual and racial and those very specific ones, but we honestly don't have anything written very clearly about GLBT. We just don't. It's lumped kind of into everything that we don't discriminate, you can't bully; it kind of falls into the same premise of any other sexual or racial harassment that we have."* *- Hennepin Division Member* *"Our board just approved policy language, probably a year ago, that includes LGBT and questioning."* *- Central Division Member*

enumerated, and thereby included, within policy statements and surrounding protections in school districts across those districts that were part of the research sample. Based on a rubric, responses were categorized based on subject familiarity. Refer to Table 18 on the previous page for additional details.

The most minimal level of policy knowledge, "Tell me what you know about your policies for LGBT students," was termed *unaware/uncertain*. One such example of unaware/uncertain is:

> *When we look at harassment and bullying policies, I'm very aware of that of the forms to fill out [sic], and if a student had a complaint of another student bullying or harassing or if it was a staff member, we have a policy in our handbook where our students come in, report it, fill out a form, and then, we would investigate it. (Western Division Member)*

This fundamental level of response spoke not of the knowledge of district policy language, but was solely procedural in nature.

The intermediate level of policy knowledge was designated as *aware that a policy exists*. An example of this level of response is:

> *I'm just looking through our policy book. I don't know that we have anything which specifically articulates, other than students are in a protected class, as are adults, so they have protections because of harassment. And so, they would be considered, like the other protected classes, in any kind of policies we have associated with just general harassment. (Hennepin Division Member)*

Despite not citing specific LGBT enumeration in the policy statements, this leader's response reflected familiarity with the district policies and how they might be interpreted

for sexual minority students.

The deepest level of policy knowledge was labeled *knowledgeable*. An example of knowledgeable was:

> *We have specific policies in place for sexual and racial and those very specific ones [sic], but we honestly don't have anything written very clearly about GLBT. We just don't. It's lumped kind of into everything that we don't discriminate [sic], you can't bully; it kind of falls into the same premise of any other sexual or racial harassment that we have. (Central Division Member)*

Other than not using preferred LGBT terminology, this subject was truly aware of existing district policy statements and coverage levels.

Responses to the third interview question, "Do you have a policy at the district level?" were divided sharply. The majority of respondents stated they did have district policies that covered LGBT students. A few subjects were ambiguous in their affirmative responses, while some felt they first had to look up the applicable policies in the district policy reference book, or they were reluctant to answer definitively. A small number of respondents replied they did not have district policies that covered LGBT students. One respondent replied they simply did not know. Table 19 presents additional details.

Table 19: *Number reporting having district policies for LGBT students*

n=31	Response Count	Percentage
No, do not have district policies covering LGBT students	6	19%
Yes, do have district policies covering LGBT students	24	77%
Did not know	1	3%

In addition to grasping a sense of the participating school leaders' policy knowledge, an understanding was gained of whether districts were, in fact, specific with protected class enumeration or much more global in district policy statements. A majority of subjects responded that their school district policies for LGBT students were akin to an *umbrella policy* or one in which the language was generic, yet inclusive, for 'all' students. Although subjects conveyed varying degrees of LGBT policy awareness, a pattern of naiveté emerged when compared to the actual results from the document review. There were many instances in which subjects were confident in their affirmative responses regarding either district policy or student publications, when in fact the opposite was true. One respondent did not know. Table 20 presents additional details.

Table 20: *Number reporting enumerated v. umbrella statements in district policy*

n=31	Response Count	Percentage
Enumerated policy statements	9	29%
Umbrella policy statements	21	68%
Did not know	1	3%

The second research question, "To what extent are district policies reflected in student handbooks in these districts?" was aligned to interview question 6, "Does your district policy show up in your building policy publications such as your handbook?" If subjects responded 'no,' a follow up question was asked to gain deeper insight. The responses of subjects to interview question 6 exposed the alignment or misalignment of district policy to district policy statements provided to students in building publications. Refer to Table 21 on the next page for additional details.

The third research question, "What is the perception of local leaders about their LGBT school policies?" corresponded with the interview questions in two different ways.

Table 21: *Number reporting that policy statements appeared in student handbook*

n=31	Response Count	Percentage
No, district policy statements are not in student handbook	2	6%
Yes, district policy statements are in student handbook	29	94%

First, the question was aligned to both interview question 2, "Did school leaders within your school organization discuss what happened to Anoka-Hennepin following the results of their lawsuit?" and interview question 5, "Do you believe what happened to Anoka-Hennepin made any impact on your organization's interest in having policies for LGBT students?" It seemed likely that school leaders would have discussed the Anoka-Hennepin incident within their school organizations at some level due to the national coverage and impending damages the Minnesota district faced. It was also projected that subjects might have used the Anoka-Hennepin lawsuit incident as a 'call to action' to explore their own district policies and building publications with respect to LGBT individuals.

When asked, 26 of 31 respondents shared their perspective as to whether the Anoka-Hennepin lawsuit situation made any impact on their organization with respect to policy for LGBT students. It was nearly evenly split between believing there was no impact and believing there was impact on their organization. Fourteen subjects believed there was no impact, while twelve believed there had been an impact upon their organization regarding LGBT students.

The responses of level of impact were then compared to what type of discussion, if any, subjects had regarding the Anoka-Hennepin situation. Refer to Table 22 on the next page for additional details. It is possible that such a contrast may allude to the level

of social acceptance sexual minorities have within a given school community or even the community at large and could be explored more fully through future research. Not surprisingly, the largest group represented in the comparisons was those subjects who believed the events in Anoka-Hennepin impacted their organization and that their organization held both formal and informal discussions. Those reporting that no impact was made in their organization was also the largest group without or only informal discussions.

Table 22: *Did subjects discuss Anoka Hennepin incident v. impact on policy?*

n=31	No impact	Yes, impact
No discussion	37.4%	62.6%
Yes, informal discussion	37.5%	62.5%
Yes, formal discussion	31.4%	68.6%
Yes, both formal & informal discussion	25.5%	74.5%

Second, when asked the final interview question, "Is there anything else you wish to share about policy or treatment of LGBT students?" a large proportion of subjects shared contextual comments beyond answers to the interview questions posed, which likely indicated a perceptual inclination to both their knowledge of and concern for LGBT students. Responses yielded greater insight into the inclusion, or exclusion, of LGBT students within the school organization. Content of the contextual responses ranged across a variety of topics (Refer to Figure 3 for additional details).

The majority of the subjects added additional comments about the Anoka-Hennepin situation, ranging from insinuating that the district was somehow negligent, to others who believed the Anoka-Hennepin event was somehow a call-to-action for all school districts. One such example that brings Anoka-Hennepin to light is: *I don't want*

Figure 3: *Contextual comments v. subject policy awareness displayed by number of respondents for each*

n=27	Responses	Sample Quotations
Reaction to AH lawsuit	18	*"I think a lot of it in regard to policy really goes back to bad policy that Anoka-Hennepin had, that supposedly required all employees to remain neutral. And I think that's where the lawsuit really got a hold. And it's hard to really argue for bad policy."* *- Northeast Division Member* *"Well, policy guides and directs, and situations are different, and I think if you've true student interest and their rights at the forefront and policy, you have to protect those things. Usually, we don't see news headlines when there's too strong of a degree of protection out there – "* *- Northeast Division Member*
Discount the problem	10	*"I don't think that's ever come up as an issue for us. I can't even remember a time when even informally somebody was concerned. No, I [don't] think so. I don't feel like there's anything that excludes them in the first place. So they would feel included. There's nothing to exclude them – "* *- Western Division Member* *"So, you know, I'd like to believe that we have a pretty healthy climate in [Anytown]. Yeah, I guess if I was otherwise aware I'd certainly reach out."* *- Capitol Division Member*
Current policy is adequate	8	*"I think we've always felt pretty strongly about protecting students' rights."* *- Northeast Division Member* *"Oh, 15 years ago or many years ago, and we've been very, very open about that and so we haven't had to, we haven't had any issues but we just made sure that every, all of the administrators were on the same page."* *- Central Division Member*
Concerns for community	6	*"I just think that the awareness isn't there. I – there shouldn't be a reason why those particular individuals have to hide who they are. And it would just be wonderful if we were more accepting. Being in a small community we're not gonna be probably as accepting as the bigger communities are but we need to be. And creating some awareness about that I think will help."* - *Southwest Division Member* *"But I gotta let you know, too, in my region here, [we're] very ultraconservative Republican. John Kline, Mary Liz Holmberg; some of these ultraconservative Republicans I've had to go up against a little bit in regards to their beliefs in what can happen. I mean, they don't want the clubs, but yet, 'Let us have our children pray around the pole.' And so I've had to educate our community in regards to the rights that these GLBT students have."* *- Southwest Division Member*
Need more than just policy	5	*"Well, I think the focus is not around let's avoid a lawsuit. The focus is let's provide our service to our students, and I think we are very – I think our minds our correct where they should be around serving students, and we need to take a look at these, so thank you for the opportunity to participate in your study. That's a good thing."* *- Central Division Member* *"Policy, no, I would say inclusion – I've been here for six years now, and I can only in my memory think of one incident where I felt a student – I should say that came to my attention. That's probably the clarifier – where a student, I would say, was being harassed by other students because he was gay. . . . . frankly, we're an equity district, so how are we addressing equity for our LGBT kids? And so, not so much like we decided we needed a new policy, but I think it was more of how are we acting, how are we behaving on [sic] our day to day within our school?"* *- Hennepin Division Member*

to sound rude, but it was just I couldn't believe some of the things that weren't happening

[in Anoka-Hennepin]. (Northeast Division member) This response cast aspersions that

the Anoka-Hennepin district somehow did not take the actions needed to rectify the

lawsuit situation in which it was embroiled.

Other respondents conveyed a message that seemed to minimize the policy needs

of LGBT students. An example of minimization was:

> *I know we've got three [students] last year that came out of the closet, or*
>
> *whatever you want to say, and all of the kids said, "We already knew that." The*
>
> *class size is 32 to 50 in a class, so all the kids know everybody already, so it*
>
> *wasn't like a big surprise or a shock value, and everybody's treated the same no*
>
> *matter what they are any way, so that's what's great about being at [Anytown].*
>
> *(Northern Division member)*

Although this subject came from a smaller-sized school, which seemingly may make

such a response more credible, research has shown that even in smaller locales

minimization can mask a victim's 'situational truth' and possibly lead to litigation

(Nabozny v. Podlesny, 1996).

Some simply indicated little interest in exploring their existing policies further as

they believed their current policies were adequate for this group of students. An example

of such a current policy is adequate response was:

> *I feel like the policy thing – you know, my feeling on the policy; it's more of how*
>
> *you live, and how you act, and how you have – what are your relationships with*
>
> *all your kids all the time? And accepting of all kids, because of who they are, not*
>
> *from label, or you know, "I'm Norwegian," so we should treat [them] differently.*

Why does there have to be? Why does there have to be a label? Ahh, right?

Right? (Central Division member)

The response from this subject seemed to assume that the needs of sexual minority students were being met by non-action. Since there was no outcry for specific needs, there must be none.

Nearly one-third of the subjects making contextual comments shared that they had concerns for their community surrounding this topic. These comments ranged from the subject's community, perhaps, being unready or unwilling to explore this topic, to other messages of a desire to somehow advance the subject's Greater Minnesota or conservative community with zeal wanting to meet the needs of this population of students.

I'm really interested to see what your results show and see if it's just an [Anytown] issue that is being in rural Minnesota, we don't have a large incidence of it. We do have two gay young men right now in our school, and we don't have any policies – even when we start talking about subgroups, or we talk about equity of students, that subgroup just seems to be one that's brushed over, and I don't know if that's just because it's been pretty low incidence, or if it's because we're a very rural Christian community, or if it's because it's just – I'm curious to find out if this is [Anytown], 'cause I've only been at [Anytown] for two and a half years. (Northeast Division member)

Other contextual comments included subjects who believed the LGBT students needed more than policy alone; however, whether these comments were borne out of a genuine desire to provide additional supports or whether they were borne out of

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dismissing the issue as being possibly trivial was sometimes unclear. An example of a response suggesting a need greater than policy was:

> *You know, will passing a new policy in my district or anybody else's district change what people feel, or believe, or how they really behave? And realistically, the answer is probably no. I mean, it might change how I behave. And it scares me a little bit. Do we need – let's say we pass a statewide legislative law, and we have the new bullying policy. Well, if it's as some of the past examples have been written – we have to investigate every event, and write a letter back, and so on – my goodness; the amount of time that would actually take, even as an assistant principal here. (Northern Division member)*

Many of the subjects disclosed that their school was providing additional resources to support LGBT inclusivity. (Refer to Figure 4 for additional details.) The majority of respondents (14 of 17) stated the additional resources were in the form of a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), Diversity Club, or Culture Club. One respondent stated:

> *I think we're probably one of the few schools in the State of Minnesota that has a gay and straight alliance (Southeast Division member).*

Despite student clubs or organizations being the most common response by subjects in terms of resources provided, this respondent stated that his school was unique.

Other subjects shared that they were holding some type of campaign aimed at anti-bullying, acknowledging LGBT peers, or restorative justice. One member stated:

> *We're kind of on a campaign on that [anti-bullying]. It came out of our climate committee. And discussed in those discussions with students was the LGBT issues in terms of the discrimination there and how that falls under bullying. We don't*

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Figure 4: *Type of additional resources made available beyond policy displayed by number of respondents for each*

n=17	**Responses**	**Sample Quotations**
Clubs – e.g., Diversity, GSA	14	*"Other than we have a group of students that meets weekly with an advisor, and that advisor has promised to articulate to us any reports of bullying or harassment, or if these students aren't feeling welcomed, or if they're feeling marginalized in any way. We feel that the students have a positive relationship with this teacher and that we feel confident that we would get feedback if that occurred."* *- Hennepin Division Member*
Campaign	5	*"The National Day of Silence; we support that, even though I have parents calling and saying they're going to keep their children at home."* *- Hennepin Division Member*
Safe Place Symbols/Ally	5	*"We have the signs around; the safe signs, where students know if they need somebody to talk to, they can seek them out."* *- Hennepin Division Member*
Transgender Awareness	5	*"But you know one thing, and I don't know if this relates to your research or not, but we have transgender students in our schools, and we have for the first time this year built some practices around how they identify and what does that mean in terms of their daily operating procedure."* *- Capitol Division Member*
Trainings Provided	4	*"We have a – I don't know if you know who Jamie Novotny is. We just brought him in. [Note: He's a former LGBT student from Ashland, WI who was severely bullied and later sued the school district and won the suit, which was nationally covered.] Yeah. And we had him in for a complete staff meeting, and then we brought him in for our eighth grade students. All the kids saw the video that went along with it. This is the second year that we've done that."* *- Central Division Member*
Counselors/Social Workers	2	*"There are support groups through our counseling office for students that do have questions about sexual identity and how to navigate those pieces."* *- Capitol Division Member*
Outside Speakers or Assembly	2	*"And we had a student gathering, a student assembly."* *- Western Division Member*
Supportive of GLBT Faculty/Staff	2	*"You know I also, just being a gay administrator, have felt supported by my boss . . . . And she said, 'I don't have a problem with that. You are who you are and you're a good leader, and that's who I'm looking for.' . . . . I've always felt support that either the assistant principals will intervene on something that a student might say, or the district administrators will intervene with the parent. Yes, so this district is super supportive."* *- Hennepin Division Member*
Reporting Structures	1	*"We have an anonymous reporting structure where people can report via an icon on our school webpage that's anonymous if they feel something's happening. And also, students are guaranteed if they report things anonymously, they have a guarantee of anonymity if they report things."* *- Hennepin Division Member*

allow those sort of things as well. (Northeast Division member)

Several subjects stated that dedicated staff or spaces were identified as being *safe* with some type of sticker or other marking indicating to LGBT students that they could seek refuge or counsel there. One such respondent indicated:

We had a student this year do something around safe rooms, and the last feature is to have all safe rooms put on the rainbow [sticker] outside your door - so kids know someone I can talk to if I want to. This person's safe...most of our rooms have that outside. That's impressive. (Hennepin Division member)

One group of respondents shared comments that indicated their school organization had progressed further in their thinking about the needs of sexual minorities beyond being comprised of merely gays and lesbians. Five subjects mentioned transgender student needs across a range of perceived comfort or familiarity with this group of students. One respondent stated:

Personally I think the transgenders [sic] are much more difficult to deal with than a gay man or a lesbian. Just, I mean, right now we have a policy that a transgender student must go to their God-given restroom. (Southeast Division member)

Yet when the subject's district-level policies were examined during the document review for this study, no record was found regarding the managed use of lavatory facilities for transgendered students.

Some subjects indicated that they were providing specialized trainings within their school organizations. Of those who responded that trainings were provided as additional resources in this area, two responded that the trainings were for students and

one responded the trainings was for their staff. One respondent, however, stated that trainings were provided for students and staff alike.

The remaining responses to interview question 8 were made by fewer subjects. Two respondents mentioned that counselors or social workers had some special training or knowledge base intended to meet the needs of LGBT students. Two respondents indicated they held assemblies or brought in outside speakers with the intent of broadening the knowledge base of their staff and student body surrounding the needs of LGBT individuals. One respondent shared that his/her school had special reporting procedures for students to be confident of anonymity if they did report incidents of harassment or bullying. Lastly, two subjects who identified as LGBT themselves briefly shared their experience in their school organization. Each felt confident that they were supported by their staff and administration in their schools.

Observations

When I purposely observed my thoughts and actions throughout the research process, I learned there are subjective thoughts and qualities that were evoked as I connected with the subjects and topics throughout the course of this research (Peshkin, 1998). One example arose during an interview with a subject from the Southeast Division when it was shared that those students who identify as transgendered were somehow covered under a perceived 'policy' that directed them to use the restroom belonging to their birth gender. I found myself flush with disbelief and hoped that it was not visible on archaic and insensitive; I found myself, however, recognizing dual qualities of subjectivity from my role as not only a researcher and school leader, but also as a homosexual female with feelings of compassion for the students in these leaders' schools.

I am thus reminded by Peshkin that it "is like a garment that cannot be removed, insistently present in both the research and non-research aspects of our life" (1988, p. 17).

Perceptions

Across the different modes of data collection there appeared to be a contradiction in knowledge by the respondents as to in what policies and documentation, if any, LGBT inclusive language appeared. In many instances building leaders overstated the prevalence of such language appearing in both district and building policy publications (student handbooks). The most frequent instance of inconsistency was those subjects believing LGBT inclusive language was included in their building publications, when it was instead lacking. Table 23 details the numbers.

Table 23: *Number of policies aligned that actually appear in student handbook*

Interview Data: Number of respondents reporting all six policies appeared in handbook including LGBT	Document Review: Number of policies actually appeared in handbook including LGBT
1	4 out of 6, or 67%
3	3 out of 6, or 50%
3	2 out of 6, or 33%
13	1 out of 6, or 17%
9	0 out of 6, or 0%

Nine subjects from districts reported their district policy statements enumerating LGBT students did appear in the school-level documents when, in reality, none of their policies appeared in the school-level documents. Thirteen subjects reported their enumerated policy statements did appear in the school-level documents when only one policy appeared. There was one instance of two subjects from the same secondary school

who reported the opposite of one another. One stated no district policy statements appeared in student documents while his/her immediate colleague reported they did appear in student documents, all within the same school. In fact, three policy statements enumerating LGBT did appear in their student handbook.

Out of 31 total respondents, thirty subjects responded affirmatively that their schools included their district policy statements enumerating LGBT students in their student publications, such as a student handbook. Only one subject accurately reported they did not include the district-level policy statements in their student-level documents. Of those 30 subjects who reported that LGBT inclusive language was contained in their building publications, eight respondents were in error for their building publications completely lacked such vernacular.

There was also an emerging theme of leaders believing their district documentation lacked LGBT inclusion, when in fact, all thirty-one subjects had LGBT inclusive language at the district level contained specifically in the Equal Educational Opportunity Policy. Yet only 27 subjects responded affirmatively that their district had existing policy inclusive of LGBT students. Four subjects responded that they had no existing district policy inclusive of LGBT students. Upon verifying policy documentation, the districts for all 31 respondents did indeed have some type of district policy inclusive of LGBT students.

Conclusion

Much of the policy struggle as shown in these results links back to the three theoretical frameworks explicated in Chapter Two: social norm theory, school culture theory, and educational policy. The research for this dissertation remained focused on the

role of school policy in shaping the school environment for LGBT students as well as the perceptions of secondary school principals of their existing policy. The social norm theoretical framework from Chapter Two can actually be recast for more meaningful interpretation of the results through the following three norm structures.

First, social norms can be more attributable to *individual norms* and can be interpreted as the social norms individual students feel bound to or to the social norms the school leaders are somehow compelled. Social influence can be cast as an effective component in reducing the perpetuation of prejudicial viewpoints of marginalized groups (Zitek & Hebl, 2006). Many school leaders described existing policy conditions that somehow extended from their perceptions that the status quo was meeting the needs of all, while researchers chastised them as having been unresponsive to acts of anti-gay bias and harassment (Elze, 2003; Griffen & Ouellett, 2003; Horn et al., 2008; Macgillivray, 2000; Szalacha, 2003). The projection of status quo by school leaders as being an acceptable level of protection for LGBT students, as evidenced by the data resulting from this study, served as a testament that social norms existed in Minnesota secondary schools.

Second, school culture theory also has underpinnings of norms, but would be better defined from the resulting data as *institutional norms*. We are reminded that leadership practices within a school potentially have a greater impact than policies or procedures (Alemán, 2009; Lugg, 2003; Meyer, 2010; Roffman, 2000; Rottmann, 2006). Furthermore, Lipkin stated that the commitment level of administrators increases once they are convinced of the value of anti-gay bullying and harassment interventions and when they are involved in the decision making (1999, p. 256). The data emanating from

this study clearly show the misalignment of school-level policy to that of district-level policy specifically with regard to LGBT protections, and several of the subjects who were interviewed seemingly discounted the need for such protections. These instances call for greater exploration into the relationship to such institutional norms.

Third, policy may be better described as *governance norms* for school organizations. Whether policy represents the specified language and content from Minnesota Statute 121A.03 Model Policy Subd. 2, or whether it more accurately represents the blanketed universal application of broad policy statements, the level of detail included for protected classes does align itself with the acceptance of stakeholders. Button et al. (1997) remind us of the power in the perpetuation of the notion of a policy requirement in order to provide a safe school experience for LGBT students. Furthermore, the researchers extoll that over time, policy can impart new beliefs and attitudes among people. Beneath this lens, policy can be interpreted as governance norms that provide the baseline for policy declarations for all students, including protected classes. Most especially in the case for those policy edicts required by legislation, school officials are harkened to provide clear, definitive direction in both district and school-level policy documentation.

Despite the explication of the three theoretical frameworks as *individual norms*, *institutional norms*, and *governance norms*, researchers have placed the responsibility of changing the norms of school culture squarely with the adults, namely school administrators (LeCompte, 2000; Lipkin, 1999; Macgillivray, 2004a). Based on a case study, LeCompte concluded that the degree of effort put forth by administrators and staff alike is critical for school safety, particularly for LGBT students (p. 413). Riehl calls

upon principals to become change agents for inclusivity as they hold positions of

specialized responsibilities and opportunities to enact change (2000, p. 58). The results of

this study uncovered potentially limited understanding of the needs of LGBT protections

for students in the form of policy by many of the participating administrators, as well as

the incongruence of policy documentation between the district and school level.

Chapter 5

Summary

"If policy and practice are inconsistent, the district can 'lose in a court of

law before it starts.'"   — Jay Worona (as cited in Darden, 2008, p. 55)

Recent history has shown that 26 districts from 15 states in just 16 years faced nearly $5 million in litigation costs due to anti-gay bullying or harassment, including the Anoka-Hennepin School District in Minnesota (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network: National Center for Lesbian Rights, 2012). Such maelstroms exposed school and district leaders as potentially remiss in adopting and enforcing policies that might afford protections to sexually marginalized students from anti-gay bullying and harassment. As such, whatever the measure of accuracy in the media, the Anoka-Hennepin School District was embroiled in a lawsuit due to the *neutrality policy* the school board approved, which called for school personnel to "remain neutral" in all matters related to sexual orientation and questioning students (Baca, 2012b). Despite previous cases of districts facing litigation penalties, each day LGBT students continue to enter school buildings that offer minimal policy protection and little structured support or guidance to staff or students in how to embrace them within the social norms of the organization in which they should undoubtedly feel included like other students.

In the previous chapters this study explored the level of existing policy coverage for LGBT youth in a sample of Minnesota public school districts. This concluding chapter introduces the historic underpinnings that identify education as a lagging institution with respect to social amelioration spanning from the early twentieth century

to today. I explore ideas for educational leaders to consider in championing expansive

policy to envelop and protect the LGBT student populations they serve based on their

important role in shaping school policy within their school buildings. The chapter also

prompts evaluators who may work alongside public school leaders to remain vigilant in

their interpretation of educational culture when it includes evidence of marginalized

populations.

In this final chapter, I urge educational leaders to discover strategies to embrace

more reflective decision-making practices with regard to educational policy. It provides a

four-step strategy, or checklist of actions, for leaders to embrace in order to transform the

policy landscape of their school organizations on behalf of LGBT students. In so doing,

the social norms of the institutions may begin to expand such that they will genuinely

serve *all* students. In closing—and on a positive note—this chapter reviews recent events

of the societal advancement of LGBT individuals to proclaim incremental advances in the

broader 21st century society that help illustrate the timeliness of changing social norms

across the broader society.

Major Findings

"To advocate for social justice, while being risk-adverse

in practice, is the worst sort of professional hypocrisy."

— Lugg & Shoho, 2006, p. 205

The data from this study centered on three key themes. First, the results

from this study show that some districts lack the basic policy language regarding

LBGT students as set forth in Minnesota legislation. Second, in some districts the

results uncovered inadequate student-level policy statements misaligned to the district documents they presumably represented. Third, findings from the qualitative interviews indicate that some leaders were unaware of what their current school organization afforded the LGBT student community in terms of protections and supports. Table 24 summarizes the themes that emerged from the study.

Table 24: *Summary of data-based themes*

Research Question	Findings
1. What are Minnesota school districts' written policies regarding LGBT youth?	Eighty-three percent of sampled districts lacked enumeration in at least some of the basic policy language as set forth in Minnesota legislation.
2. To what extent are the district policies reflected in student handbooks in these districts?	Ninety percent of policy statements in student-level documents were misaligned to the sampled district policy document statements.
3. What is the perception of local leaders about their LGBT school policies?	Forty-two percent of leaders were unclear of what their current school organization afforded the LGBT student community in terms of protections and supports.

First, 83% of the participating districts lacked enumeration of sexual minorities in one or more of their district policy statements required by Minnesota legislation. Additionally, there were no instances of districts having fewer than two policies in place enumerating sexual minorities. This may be partly attributable to the fact that 21 out of 29 respondents credited their policy statements to the boilerplate model policies put forth

by the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA), which is a mixed offering of both prudence and convenience. Meyer (2010), Murray (2011), and Rienzo et al. (2006) call for the adoption of policy that directly addresses anti-gay bullying and harassment, including guidelines and specific language, in order to achieve widespread change. This is confirmed by other researchers who align the existence of specific policy as pivotal in beginning to impact change in the school culture for LGBT students (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Elze, 2003; Hinde, 2004; Macgillivray, 2004b; Meyer, 2010; National School Boards Association, 2004; Rienzo et al., 2006; Wald et al., 2002). Considering the majority of district policy documents enumerate across the policies required by legislation, achieving full alignment with all policies required by Minnesota legislation, including the enumeration of LGBT, should not only be a reasonable goal, but one that can be easily achieved.

Second, results exposed a crevasse in some cases between district-level policy and student-level publications with regard to the enumeration of the protected class that this study focused on, namely LGBT individuals. Darden stated, "Bad policies . . . can spark chaos, blur the board's vision, and allow lawsuits to succeed even when a school district is in the right" (2008, p. 54). It is the duty of school leaders to familiarize themselves with research findings such as those explored and uncovered by this study, as well as the numerous lawsuits faced by districts across the county, to draw attention to the issue and consider what to do about it in their local context. When changes are made, they should include remonstration, especially where the school organization and its leaders have seemingly contributed to injustice on sexual minorities (Lugg & Murphy, 2014).

In truth, the challenge for school boards and the leaders within the organization is

ensuring that no reality gap comes between the official policy on paper and what transpires in daily practice (Darden, 2008). The results of this research sample clearly exposed such a gap in many districts. There were 29 districts with one or more policies in place enumerating LGBT individuals in their statements. Yet, when those very policy statements were sought in the student handbooks that are annually produced and distributed to students, a gap appeared in 26 cases. The policy statement was either not reproduced in any way, or it was reproduced in a limited way lacking the enumeration that appeared in the district-level policy. Such a gap puts school officials in a vulnerable position when official policy is misaligned to the actions they carry out, and simultaneously sends messages to LGBT individuals that they are not seen as part of the fabric of the organization. Instead of making broad references to the larger district policy manual, there ought to be clear evidence that practices exist for communicating policies to all stakeholders (Darden, 2008).

Third, while some of the leaders interviewed seemed unaware in their statements of interest and application of anti-bullying and harassment policies, others were clear in that they were seemingly aware of the gravity school board policies possess. It has been stated that policy is really the "central nervous system" of a board's power to enact change (Darden, 2008). In other words, board policies function in the same capacity as judicial laws for school personnel, students, and other visitors who may enter school property and are bound to follow. Policy also sheds some light on a school district's official position on any given issue (Darden, 2008). Is it possible some of the leaders who struggled to accurately recount whether district policies truly were representative of LGBT students were likewise uncomfortable to look further within their organizations?

Were some of the leaders somehow intentionally or unintentionally prohibited to more deeply understand how the policy needs of this potentially marginalized group of students were being met by policy documents in their own buildings?

Discussion

> *"Any defensible educational program must be adjusted to a particular time and place, and the degree and nature of the imposition must vary with the social situation."*   — George Counts (1932, p. 18)

Links to Literature Review

It is important to reconsider Rottmann's call for a critical theory framework to be used as a "conceptual lens to help educators broaden current notions of 'effective' leadership, and challenge heterosexist discrimination in schools" (Rottmann, 2006, p. 10). Yet, according to critical researchers Lugg and Shoho, leaders of school organizations seemingly desire to position themselves in non-controversial roles within the surrounding political structures while simultaneously trying to retain their positional power as injustice and inequity continue to unrecognizably fester (Lugg & Shoho, 2006). Describing similar circumstances, Macgillivary called upon board members and school leaders. Not only is there a responsibility to make changes on behalf of sexually marginalized youth, he also cautions that such changes need to be made in a much more public and transparent forum as it yields greater results than "quiet passage of school policies….[that] could have negative and unforeseen consequences" (2004b, p. 78). It is possible that due to similar notions of fear of lack of support or reprisal that leaders

across the United States may simply perpetuate inequitable social norms in their schools instead of taking the more difficult steps to launch new ones.

There is a need for school officials to consider the five-stage intervention framework Berkokwitz (2003) presented in order to begin to shift existing social norms, including acknowledging the importance of the explicit enumeration of sexual minority individuals in school policy at all levels. The results from this study seemingly place the majority of subjects somewhere on the continuum of (a) individuals notice the event, in this case LGBT policy statements being incongruent between district and school documentation, (b) individuals interpret the event as problematic, and (c) individuals feel some sense of responsibility to find a solution. Participant responses suggest that Berkowitz's remaining two stages—(d) individuals possess skills to act and (e) individuals intervene to change course—would likely be explored through continued research endeavors on this topic.

The LGBT School Experience Factors Conceptual Framework presented in Chapter Two (see p. 52) displays two distinct pillars at its edges—social norms and school culture. Among the results from the telephone interviews, social norms played a secondary role. Social norms were difficult to elicit within the questioning route used. Certainly there were a small number of responses that skirted the edges to suggest that social or community norms may have made it difficult to enact protections for LGBT students. Similarly, Meyer (2010) contends that administrators' lack of action in cases of anti-gay harassment and bullying intimate that LGBT students are not welcomed. Meyer makes clear that leaders naturally are serving as role models and must provide the direction to others (2010). This notion diverges slightly from the conceptual framework's

social norm pillar, but offers opportunities for future exploration through research into the behavior of students surrounding social norms.

In consideration of the responses from subjects during the course of telephone interviews and the discovery that occurred while examining district and school policy, there appears to be a role for the concepual framework among the results as a means to more deeply understand school culture as it relates to the role of school leaders and school policy. It is clear from the resulting incongruence of LGBT enumeration between policy statements in school-level student handbooks and those at the district level that school leaders held some influence in the process. Researchers support this notion for the existence of appropriate school policy (in this case, policy that enumerates LGBT individuals would be deemed appropriate) bears an impact upon changing school culture on behalf of LGBT students (Biegel & Kuehl, 2010; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Elze, 2003; Hinde, 2004; Macgillivray, 2004b; Meyer, 2010; National School Boards Association, 2004; Rienzo et al., 2006; Wald et al., 2002). Furthermore, Meyer (2010), Murray (2011), and Rienzo et al. (2006) declare that policy addressing harassment surrounding sexual diversity, including specific language, must be adopted in order to achieve full-scale cultural change.

To begin to create social justice within their organizations, leaders have to begin to take risks. Lugg and Shoho declared that if modern-day school leaders would espouse a social justice and reconstructionist view of leadership, they would be experiencing a similar inconsistent political vulnerability as those that George Counts encountered in the Progressive Era of American education (2006, p. 198). The prevailing barriers include potential loss of support from high-ranking school district leaders to

losing support from external stakeholders, all in the name to ensure a safe learning environment of all (Lugg & Shoho, 2006).

Considerations for Educational Leaders

Why do some educational leaders seemingly lag behind with respect to shaping policy and culture to be reflective of the current norms of society as a whole? The results of this research disclosed that many Minnesota school district leaders adopted policies that have not been effectively communicated to the students despite the requirements of the policy applying to them, or, in other words, a small number of district leaders have plainly not adopted policies aligned to requirements of state legislation (Minnesota State Revisor, 2014). Might school leaders be minimizing legislative requirements, or might they be *abbreviating* or *modifying* student handbook policy language in such a manner that the district policy statements appearing in school-level documentation are no longer the same? Furthermore, if such policies are worded too broadly, Macgillivray cautions school leaders that the policy may then be in violation of the such students' First Amendment rights to freedom of speech (2004b, p. 77).

There is widespread agreement that social science research has not generally had a major influence upon policy or practice (Weiss, Murphy-Graham, Petrosino, & Gandhi, 2008). Over the years, researchers have exerted great effort at attempting to draw connections between policy and research evidence, yet it is rare that the results of studies directly influence change in the trajectory of policy development (Weiss et al., 2008). Organizational leaders and policy makers alike have been called upon to familiarize themselves with research findings or to develop a "strong understanding of current conditions" before proceeding into the murkiness of developing policy (Weiss et al.,

2008, p. 29). Could it be that the social norms of a given school organization or community have overshadowed current research findings such that school leaders all but ignored the results, as Weiss et al. suggest (2008, p. 30)?

Weiss et al. classify the hurdles to effective partnerships between research results and policy development into three overarching categories: (a) deficiencies in research and researchers, (b) deficiencies in policy makers and practitioners, and (c) deficiencies connecting the two territories (2008, p. 31). The results of this study suggest that the hurdle that may best align in this case is (b) deficiencies in policy makers and practitioners. Policy makers are adopting policy, but the results of this study suggest that some practitioners are unfamiliar with the policy details and perhaps are challenged on how to convey the expectations of the policy in a broad sense to students.

Similarly, scholars have also stated that "evaluation has usually had only modest influence on policy and practice" such that "…..studies seem to be used in selective bits, reinterpreted to fit existing preferences, or ignored" (Weiss et al., 2008, p. 30). Could this phenomenon be facing school leaders in a similar fashion? If so, we must then return to a more fundamental need to begin to draw new relationships between both research and policy. While this study did not directly address evaluators, implications for evaluation practice certainly emerge when evaluators work in public education settings.

Considerations for Evaluators

It is in Karpinski and Lugg's call for educational leaders to find alliances for change through 'like-minded people' (2006, p. 288) where they may find a natural connection with evaluators. As an overall practice, evaluators maintain a belief that their work will help create a better world in ways that may be small or large (Stake, 2004).

Among six advocacy traits highlighted by Stake, evaluators are known to hold to a confluence of ideas with high hopes they will find that the program they are evaluating is working (2004, p. 103). As such, Stake suggests evaluators are at times challenged to find opportunities for more difficult change or improvement; they are seemingly predisposed to more quickly uncover evidence that attests to a program's success rather than its failure (2004, p. 104). Thus, it is imperative that evaluators of educational settings in which culture or policy may be studied become aware of the potential non-transference of district-level policy statements into the hands of students.

Like educators, evaluators are often staunch zealots for a democratic society, which for the evaluator occurs through the flow of quality information emanating from their studies (Stake, 2004). When educational policy leaders are not serving as the proselytizers for creating environments that embrace all students, including sexually marginalized students, how might they join with evaluators to more effectively leverage organizational cultural change to advance policies into actual practice? According to Greene, democratic principles should influence decision making and discussion as the interests of all valid stakeholders are represented in an evaluation (1997, p. 28). As such, "[I]t is time for evaluators to claim and proclaim their advocacy" (Greene, 1997, p. 28).

Alone, an evaluator is unable to tell the entire story for, despite attempting to exercise good faith, much will not be reported, and much will not be understood (Stake, 2004). Therefore, perhaps by calling upon evaluators to forge partnerships with educational leaders and policy makers, there will be a greater chance of success to interpret deeper context within the findings to positively affect the organizational culture in order to begin to shift social norms in organizations still needing to make a shift. While

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educational leaders may sometimes be seen as change efforts' procrastinators or blockers, it seems likely the majority of evaluators cannot help but to influence change and to seek social justice where necessary thereby through a parternership deeper insight may be gained. Evaluators believe that when a successful evaluation study is concluded, they have made a contribution to the societal greater good, in this case, Minnesota school organizations.

Recommendations

". . . . . social justice for educational administrators means pursuing
policies, practices, and politics that enhance the lifetime opportunities
for all children, particularly those children who have been historically
marginalized." —Karpinski & Lugg (2006, p. 279)

Public education is an institution that draws upon the virtue of those individuals closely associated with it. Largely, education professionals enter the field to make a positive contribution to the lives of young people or to the greater good. It is likely no different for the majority of leaders who undoubtedly desire to do the very best for the institutions they lead. Also, leaders likely unintentionally sustain institutional barriers for all students who might benefit from a school climate free from anti-gay bullying and harassment. It is therefore a hope this study will provide leaders with a practical LGBT-inclusive policy checklist, as well as to call upon future scholars to extend these results into the next leg of the research journey in order to take incremental steps forward.

District and secondary school leaders must be prompted to action in four distinct

ways that build upon the literature explored throughout this study (see Table 2). As it is likely that school leaders are not consciously perpetuating the institutional barriers that LGBT students face with regard to a lack of protections issued by district policy and building-level policy statements, a checklist was developed to assist leaders in a review of their current standing in this regard.

While only the first step of the checklist components stems directly from the results of this research study, the remaining components build upon the first and are borne out of declarations emerging from the literature in Chapter Two. Researchers, including Bowen and Bourgeois (2001), Mayo (2004), Macgillivray (2004b), Poteat (2007), as well as Zitek and Hebl (2006), each agree on three of the four ways to incite action for sustainable change as: (a) provision of training and professional development for staff, (b) ensuring that policies embrace the LGBT population and address acts of homophobia, and (c) establishment of school-wide programming to directly address homophobia. Likely facing undue burdens of management tasks, inordinate bureaucratic requirements, as well as simply a lack of time for meaningful reflection, it is my hope that the checklist will be of assistance to leaders in developing a purposeful annual review process. Concepts covered by the checklist include enumeration of LGBT as protected class across specific policies, provision of stakeholder trainings, inclusion advocacy, lavatory and locker room procedures for transgendered individuals, gay straight alliance or similar clubs, support liaisons, and climate-related questions. Refer to Appendix F for additional details.

First, the most elemental step in providing safe environs for LGBT students is to have policy in which they are consistently enumerated as a protected class. This means

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that catch-all phrases of 'all students' must be delineated to include sexual orientation alongside race, ethnicity, disability and gender. It also means that the policy language that is adopted at the district level must not be merely referenced or watered-down and 'put in kid language' for policy statements included in student publications. All students in secondary schools must clearly understand that any act of bullying or harassment of students who identify as LGBT, or are perceived to be LGBT, is forbidden and is clearly delineated with sexual orientation enumerated as a protected class in the Anti-Violence and Non-Discrimination, Bullying, Code of Conduct, Equal Educational Opportunity, and Harassment and Violence Prevention policies within their student handbook.

Second, the next step in fostering an atmosphere of inclusion for LGBT students in secondary schools is to provide annual trainings on this topic for students and staff alike. Professional development for staff focused on anti-bullying curriculum aimed specifically at the LGBT community may aid in breaking down social norms and stigmas. Students and adults must understand the needs of these marginalized individuals as well as to see modeled what is and is not acceptable in terms of behavior expectations, terminology, slurs, etc.

Third, support systems must be sought out and advertised for LGBT students. Not only should every secondary school have a Gay-Straight Alliance or Diversity Club that actively serves their needs, but administrators, counselors, social workers, and other key individuals should be providing training and outreach to the parents and broader school community. All adults within an academic community must have an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding about these students through training and professional development, with a goal to learn they are an integral part of the school.

Fourth, leaders must develop an atmosphere through which the inclusion of LGBT students becomes part of the accepted social norms of the school organization. Leaders must first begin to seek out knowledge that guides them on building their understanding of which terms are both modern and socially-acceptable for naming LGBT students, as well as the issues related to them. Among the related issues would be developing ways to include same-sex couples in typical school events, fostering safe places in sports locker rooms, and securing gender-neutral lavatory facilities.

Leaders must also begin to break free of any current institutional fear and community apprehension surrounding existing barriers for LGBT students to be fully accepted within the broader academic community. Regardless of their personal opinions, they must begin to tirelessly advocate for the needs of this student group and to begin to think in terms of *now what* from the process known as adaptive action (Eoyang & Holladay, 2013). Leaders must begin to consciously become aware of this often invisible student group.

Future Research

One extension of this study would be to conduct a similar study in surrounding states to decipher potential differences within a region. Certainly there are political affiliation differences between regions, some being more socially conservative, others being more socially liberal. Would all evoke the same results?

Another extension would be to conduct a similar study in which leaders would be interviewed regarding what training and professional development efforts currently occur in their school organizations. Results from such a study could help foster a common knowledge base of the characteristics surrounding sexually-marginalized individuals, to

build awareness and support strategies related to anti-gay harassment and bullying, and to develop skills to better support the LGBT protected class group.

Yet another study would be to conduct a meta-analysis in which similar policy studies might be examined to determine if the results from this study were an anomaly, or if they are a persistent pattern in a much larger context. Are some leaders more reluctant than others to embrace potentially controversial topics as evolution versus creationism in science classes, sex and reproductive education, and the inclusion of LGBT individuals in literature and history classes depending upon the ethos of the greater school community? Conducting similar policy congruence studies in other potentially controversial areas might yield a deeper understanding of the leaders' perceptions.

Anti-gay bullying and harassment policy that enumerates LGBT as a protected class group is an elemental step in the quest for improvements in school climate. Any research that stems into the next steps (e.g., training, structured supports, etc.) is encouraged. At the very least, the opportunity to conduct this same study with a larger, representative sample would be more informative. With scaffolding of such efforts, there will be greater chance that change might begin to take place.

Final Thoughts

"It takes no compromise to give people their rights... It takes no money to respect the individual. It takes no political deal to give people freedom. It takes no survey to remove repression." — Harvey Milk

The existence of social norms serving as a barrier for advancement of educational policy is not a new phenomenon. George Counts in his seminal 1932 book *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* posits that public education is a sphere in which policy is more influenced by political forces of the elitist society than by the educatational practitioners or the larger societal advancements that call for progressive change. At the time Counts accused school organizations of ceding to the perpetuation of social inequities, as well as the perpetuation of existing power structures (1932, p. 28). He further criticized educators and policy makers by suggesting that practitioners would rather wait until social solutions were first discovered when, in fact, none would emerge on their own (1932, p. 21). The arguments made by Counts did not disappear; instead, they re-emerged in 1969 (Ether, 1969) and in 2006 (Lugg & Shoho, 2006). The reemergence of Counts' call for social progress with regard to institutional policy advancement suggests that for some students, improved social conditions are still but an illusion in the arena of public education.

Counts, Ether, and Lugg and Shoho were not alone in their declarations. Karpinski and Lugg also reported that educators were viewed as translators of their community's familiar social values along with what was being required by state statute (2006). Such practices have placed educators in a position of being viewed as sustainers

of existing conditions. How is it, then, that leaders can emancipate themselves from this contradiction of being bound to progressive mandates while maintaining the normative status quo? Some scholars call upon leaders to embrace a perspective of social justice through persistence, faithfulness, and connecting with those

in the broader community who are like-minded (Karpinski & Lugg, 2006, p. 288).

Since the earliest data collection for this dissertation, several landmark events in building the rights of LGBT individuals have occurred, reflecting the speed with which social change can occur. First, television audiences moved beyond *Ellen*, television's first 'out' lesbian, to *Modern Family*, a primetime comedy featuring a gay couple that received not one, but five Emmy Awards (Stelter, 2011). Second, gender reassignment has become 'mainstream,' first with the inclusion of Chaz Bono as a competitor on television's *Dancing with the Stars* (Barnes, 2011) and most recently with the transformation of Olympian Bruce Jenner to now Caitlyn Jenner, who appeared on the June 1, 2015 cover of *Vanity Fair* magazine (Somaiya, 2015).

Third, as of early June 2015, 37 states, including the state of Minnesota and the District of Columbia, now allow gay marriage (Freedom to Marry, 2015). This is in part due to the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States. In 2013 the court ruled that the federal government must recognize same-sex marriages from any state in which a couple was legally wed and would soon will decide the constitutionality of same-sex marriage nationwide (Liptak, 2015).

Fourth, the Minnesota governor and legislature have adopted anti-bullying legislation requiring all schools in Minnesota to include specific language and practices in policy (McGuire, 2014). Fifth, the Federal Department of Labor's Occupation Safety

and Health Administration has just released a four-page document entitled *Guide to Restroom Access for Transgender Workers* to ensure that those employees who identify as transgendered are able to access lavatory facilities in a "manner that is consistent with how they live the rest of their lives" (Wheeler, 2015).

Fifth, at last on June 26, 2015, the United States Supreme Court declared the Constitution guarantees a right to same-sex marriage nationwide, despite what statewide laws exist (Barnes, 2015). In a 5-to-4 vote along party lines, justices cast the decision resulting from the case of Obergefell v. Hodges. As such, marriage is now a right for all.

Realizing that nationally our country has turned a corner on the inclusion of sexually marginalized individuals within the public arena in both law and policy, how can it be that some secondary schools across the state of Minnesota lack inclusive district policy and recorded school practices to protect those LGBT students who must be held safe? The duty of researchers, according to Lugg and Murphy, ". . . is to follow the data and then *act* on the subsequent conclusions of data. These actions include confrontation, particularly where educational institutions and their leaders contribute to the oppression of queer people" (2014, p. 1197). If schools are to remain in step with advancements in the broader society, to begin to reshape oppressive institutional social norms, to avoid misalignment of protective policies to legislative mandates, and to make known that no student—even those who may identify as LGBT—will need to endure further acts of anti-gay bullying and harassment in schools, now is the time for educational leaders to act.

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CONSENT FORM
"Implications of Policy on Inclusivity of LGBT Students:
An Overview of Statewide Public School Districts"

You are invited to participate in a statewide research study of public school policies designed to protect LGBT students. You have indicated interest to participate by volunteering for a telephone interview through an MASSP email blast. You are asked to read this form and to pose any questions you may have before agreeing to be part of the study.

This study is being conducted by Delonna Darsow, Ph.D. student in Educational Policy and Administration, from the Department of Organization Leadership and Policy Development at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to ascertain the current conditions across the state of Minnesota regarding policy for LGBT students and the disclosure for potential vulnerability to litigation on behalf of the school organization.

Procedures:
If you agree to be part of this study, you will participate in a telephone interview lasting approximately 15 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of the Study:
The line of questioning for volunteers will be well within your job responsibilities as a licensed secondary school administrator in the state of Minnesota. Thus, any physical or psychological risks of participating in this study are minimal and may include the possibility of inconvenience or discomfort in answering items. You are free to not answer any item throughout the interview. Benefits of this study will be indirect by adding to the body of research surrounding educational policy for marginalized student groups as well as providing baseline knowledge of the current state of policy for LGBT students across Minnesota school organizations.

Confidentiality:
Any information collected through this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Aggregate results will be reported only by the MASSP division. Individual responses may be used; however, all participants will be asked to select a pseudonym to afford complete anonymity in reporting of results. Interviews will be digitally recorded solely for the purpose of gaining a complete and accurate transcript of responses. Digitally recorded files will be retained for a period of one year by the researcher, after which time they will be permanently deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question, or to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

You may not receive any direct benefits from participating in the study, but participation may help to increase knowledge of the current conditions statewide regarding policy for LGBT students and the disclosure for potential vulnerability to litigation on behalf of the school organization.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have any questions about this study and what is expected of you in the study, please contact Delonna Darsow at 651-238-9384, or via email at dars0014@umn.edu. You may also contact her advisor, Dr. Jean King, at 612-626-1614, or via email at kingx004@umn.edu.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street SE, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; 612-625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to retain for your records.

Signature _____ Date _____

RESEARCH INVITATION

Do you have 15 minutes to spare?

Please consider participating in my doctoral study for the University of Minnesota on district policies.

I am seeking volunteers for a **15-minute** phone interview scheduled entirely at your convenience seeking your input on **eight** brief questions.

For more information see other side . . . . .

I promise to be BRIEF!!!

My study focuses on:
- Policies surrounding LGBT inclusivity in Minnesota school districts and secondary schools
- Building an awareness of the prominence of LGBT-inclusive policies statewide
- Contribute to the body of literature aimed at removing barriers for all student groups in Minnesota

To volunteer, please contact me directly at dars0014@umn.edu and a consent document will be forwarded to you with additional information and we will schedule an interview time at your convenience. No results will be reported by individual, site, or district and all responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

Your willingness to participate would be invaluable to my research. I truly appreciate your consideration of sharing 15 minutes of your time on this topic. If you have questions you may also reach me on my cell phone at 651-238-9384.

With gratitude,

Delonna Darsow
Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools
Doctoral Candidate, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Appendix C

"Implications of Policy on Inclusivity of LGBT Students:
An Overview of Statewide Public School Districts"

I am conducting a study on policies surrounding LGBT inclusivity in Minnesota secondary schools. You may recall having heard about the lawsuit in the Anoka Hennepin School District during the fall of 2012. The questions I am about to ask are about your awareness of policies for specific student groups in your own school organization.

Let me know if you need further clarification on any item. Please remember that you are free to not answer any item, and that you may withdraw at any time. Based on what you have heard, would you please share with me any risks you may foresee in participating in this interview? Do you have any initial questions?

1. Tell me what you know about your policies for LGBT students.

2. Did school leaders within your organization discuss what happened to Anoka-Hennepin following the results of their lawsuit? Explain.

3. Do you have a policy at the district level? Explain.

4. If yes, when did you move ahead with your policy?

5. Do you believe what happened to Anoka-Hennepin made any impact on your organization's interest in having policies for LGBT students? Explain.

6. Does your district policy show up in your building policy publications such as your student handbook? Explain.

7. If no, talk to me about the incongruence...

8. Is there anything else you wish to share about policy or treatment of LGBT students?

Subject Information:

9. What name would you like to use to identify yourself?

10. What is your position within the school district?

11. For how many years have you worked with your school district?

MASSP Division:
_____

DOCUMENT REVIEW CHECKLIST
"Implications of Policy on Inclusivity of LGBT Students:
An Overview of Statewide Public School Districts"

Date of observation:	School District:	MASSP Division:

Web or Print Policy sources:

YES   NO   1. Sexual Orientation[1] enumerated in mission statement, core
                   values, or district goals

YES   NO   2. Sexual Orientation enumerated in district policy for equal
                   employment/education opportunity

YES   NO   3. Sexual Orientation enumerated in district harassment policy
                   for staff

YES   NO   4. Sexual Orientation enumerated in district harassment policy
                   for students

YES   NO   5. Sexual Orientation enumerated in staff handbook

YES   NO   6. Sexual Orientation enumerated in student handbook

YES   NO   7. Other (Specify):

Website or Document Additions:

YES   NO   1. Equity officer or key contact information listed

YES   NO   2. Rainbow flag or other LGBT-friendly logo or identification

YES   NO   3. Student clubs such as GSA, Equity Team, or Diversity Team

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[1] *Search values will include sexual orientation, sexual preference, LGBT, GLBT, homosexual, and gay.*

DOCUMENT REVIEW CHECKLIST MATRIX

	SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES
Yes = 1 No = 0	Equal Educational Opportunity Policy #102
Yes = 1 No = 0	Mission Statement Policy #104
Yes = 1 No = 0	Equal Employment Opportunity Policy #401
Yes = 1 No = 0	Harassment/Violence Policy #413
Yes = 1 No = 0	Code of Conduct Policy #506
Yes = 1 No = 0	Bullying Policy #514
Yes = 1 No = 0	Anti-Violence Policy #525
Yes = 1 No = 0	Were district policies based on MN School Board's Association Model Policies?

	STUDENT HANDBOOK POLICIES
Yes = 1 No = 0 In Board Policy, not handbook= -1	Equal Educational Opportunity Policy #102
Yes = 1 No = 0 In Board Policy, not handbook= -1	Mission Statement Policy #104
Yes = 1 No = 0 In Board Policy, not handbook= -1	Harassment/Violence Policy #413
Yes = 1 No = 0 In Board Policy, not handbook= -1	Code of Conduct Policy #506
Yes = 1 No = 0 In Board Policy, not handbook= -1	Bullying Policy #514
Yes = 1 No = 0 In Board Policy, not handbook= -1	Anti-Violence Policy #525

SCHOOL LEADERS' CHECKLIST FOR LGBT INCLUSIVITY

	SCHOOL		DISTRICT	
	Y	N	Y	N
1. Do your policies enumerate LGBT as a protected class in policy statements in the following areas as required by MN legislation: *(For this response, school column = student handbook)*				
a. Anti-Violence/Non Discrimination				
b. Bullying				
c. Code of Conduct				
d. Equal Educational Opportunity				
e. Harassment and Violence Prevention				
2. Are professional development or awareness trainings provided surrounding issues with LGBT equality:				
a. For students				
b. For staff				
c. For other stakeholders				
3. Does your school organization advocate for the inclusion of LGBT students and staff for opportunities such as:				
a. Activities				
b. Athletics				
c. Events				
d. Leadership positions				
4. Is your organization prepared with procedures for lavatory and locker room needs for transgendered staff or students?				
5. Does your school organization have a club that specifically includes LGBT students such as a Gay-Straight Alliance, or Diversity Club?				
6. Do you have key individuals who are prepared to serve as support liaisons for LGBT staff or students?				
7. Are those key individuals readily identifiable to anyone?				
8. Does your school organization talk about LGBT issues in general?				
[2-10 is UNDEVELOPED / 11-20 is EMERGING / 21-30 is ACCEPTED]				

TALLY TOTAL COUNTS