

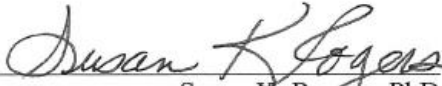
**Kansas and Missouri Secondary Principals' Perceptions of Bullying and
Discrimination and the Research-Based Practices for Supporting LGBTQ+
Students**

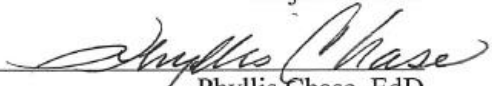
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Abstract

The first purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Kansas and Missouri secondary principals implement policies and research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students in their schools. The second purpose was to determine whether Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. The final purpose was to determine the extent to which Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. A quantitative design utilizing survey research methods was used to gather the perceptions of secondary principals in Kansas and Missouri. With permission from Boyland (personal communication, June 18, 2022), data were collected using a modified version of Boyland et al.'s (2018) Principal Survey Regarding Policies and Practices Supporting LGBTQ Students. The modified version of the survey included items to determine if Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that they implement 10 research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students, and if they agree that bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurred in their schools. Once data were collected, one-sample t tests were conducted to test the 13 hypotheses. The results provide evidence that Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that nine of the 10 practices are implemented in their schools. However, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree that an inclusive curriculum was implemented in their schools as well as disagree that bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurred in their schools. Due to the one-sample t tests yielding mixed results, a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted using the responses to each of the survey items that provided a measurement for the variables specified in the hypotheses. The chi-

square results indicated that principals mostly agree that they implement research-based practices to support LGBTQ+ students. However, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals were not in agreement that they supported the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances or similar student clubs at their schools and that an inclusive curriculum is implemented (a curriculum that positively represents minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events). Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree, are neutral, and agree that these two research-based practices are supported. Similarly, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals both disagree and agree that bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occur in their schools. Implications for action to support and protect LGBTQ+ students are included for state education agencies, college and university principal preparation programs, and school district leaders. Recommendations for future research include collecting qualitative data for each survey item to further support understanding the quantitative findings based on the principals' responses.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving and supportive partner, Jason George. He has stayed by my side throughout this whole journey. When I did not feel like writing and wanted to give up on this entire thing, he pushed me to keep going. He also stepped in to take on extra duties at home when I needed to take the time to write. I am forever grateful for all you do to support me and my dreams.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Greg and Joan Andersen. They are the epitome of “hard work goes a long way.” They have always modeled perseverance for me. While living on our family farm in South Dakota, there were many ups and downs. However, when life threw curve balls, my parents fought hard to do what was best for the family. They sacrificed so much for me. I thank them for showing us what persistence, tenacity, and self-sacrifice can do. I am forever thankful for their love, support, and lifelong teaching. I would not be where I am today without them.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my brother, Mike Andersen, and my nephews, Sam and Will. My brother has always been in my corner. He has always pushed and supported me and continues to do that for his boys. Sam and Will, know that you can do great things, like getting your doctorate, so never let anything get in the way of your dreams!

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the many LGBTQ+ staff and students trying to navigate our education systems. Each of you deserves a safe, supportive school with administrators who work tirelessly to ensure your success. Continue to advocate for yourselves and your students. You deserve the very best!

Acknowledgments

First, I want to acknowledge my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers. Thank you for supporting me through this journey. Your patience, feedback, and guidance through this process were invaluable. I am forever grateful for your commitment to my successful completion of this dissertation. Second, I would like to thank my data guru and research analyst, Dr. Margaret Waterman. I cannot thank you enough for your support with my statistical analyses and for helping it make sense for me and all those who read my dissertation. Third, I thank Janell Urban and Kathy McBride for joining me on this doctoral adventure. I will never forget our “spot” in our Baker classroom and the many laughs and sighs we had. It definitely would not have been as much fun without both of you. Fourth, I would like to thank all my professors at Baker. Each of you helped me learn and grow as a leader—a special thank you to Dr. Robins, my first major advisor. I apologize for taking too long. Please know I appreciate all you did to prepare me for finishing. Fifth, I want to acknowledge my friend and colleague, Dr. Brooke Brutto. Brooke, thank you for taking the time to join my dissertation committee. I genuinely value your feedback and support. Sixth, I would like to thank Dr. Phyllis Chase for serving on my dissertation committee and providing feedback on my dissertation. Finally, a thank you to all my family and friends! I could not have done this without every one of you rooting me on to get this done!

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. Department of HHS) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2020) conducts the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) every two years. The CDC (2020) uses the YRBSS results to monitor health-related behaviors most associated with adolescents. In 2015, the CDC included a question that helped to identify adolescents' sexual identities. Students who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, as well as those who responded they were unsure of their sexual identity or adolescents who have had sexual contact with people of the same sex, were designated as sexual minority youth (SMY). Since the inclusion of SMY in the YRBSS in 2015 and until 2019, results have indicated higher proportions of SMY experiencing violence, poor mental health, suicide ideation, and high-risk substance use (CDC, 2020). Similarly, multiple studies have indicated that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) students encounter homophobic bullying and name-calling in their schools (Crocco, 2002; Greytak et al., 2016; Jones, 2014; Sherriff et al., 2011). According to the Kosciw et al.'s (2022) Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) 2021 National School Climate Survey (NSCS) results, 83.1% of LGBTQ+ students surveyed "experienced in-person harassment or assault based on personal characteristics, including sexual orientation, gender expression, gender, religion, actual or perceived race/ethnicity, and actual or perceived disability" (p. xvi) during the 2020-2021 school year. The survey results also indicated that 58.9% of LGBTQ+ students reported personally experiencing "LGBTQ+-related discriminatory policies or practices at school" (Kosciw et al., 2022, p. xviii).

Although data indicate a much-needed response to the bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students, school leaders have miscalculated the frequency of bullying and harassment of students who identify as, or are perceived to be, LGBTQ+ (Hernandez & Fraynd, 2014). Principals agreed that bullying and harassment of LGBTQ+ students occurred; however, compared to feedback from LGBTQ+ students, principals were more likely to indicate that the frequency occurred less often (Hernandez & Fraynd, 2014). Similarly, principals acknowledged that anti-bullying policies were in place but noted that policies lacked specific language for LGBTQ+ students (Hernandez & Fraynd, 2014).

According to GLSEN (2022), “students are most likely to reach their full educational potential in positive learning environments that are safe, secure, welcoming, and where they feel a sense of belonging” (p. 2). Bishop (2012) stated that since sexual minority students have a higher chance of having health-risk behaviors and school practices, policies, and climates impact LGBTQ+ students more negatively, schools need to have school leaders who advocate for marginalized LGBTQ+ students. Therefore, the role of the principal is to be a social justice leader who supports vulnerable or marginalized LGBTQ+ students by creating positive and inclusive school environments (Boyland et al., 2016).

Background

This section provides background information, including the number of school districts, students, and secondary principals for the states included in this study, Kansas and Missouri. Additionally, background information on federal and state laws impacting LGBTQ policies in schools is included. Finally, this section also includes background

information regarding 10 research-based practices that secondary principals can implement in their schools to support LGBTQ+ students.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE, 2022) reported 287 school districts with 479,743 K-12 students in Kansas. KSDE also reported 382 high schools, 12 junior high schools, and 208 middle schools in Kansas. In the KSDE 2021-2022 State Licensed Public Schools Personnel report, KSDE (2022) reported 244.8 junior high and middle school principals and 282.7 senior high school principals.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) reported 581 school districts with 859,332 students in Grades K-12 in Missouri. Within those Missouri school districts are 569 high schools, 49 junior high schools, and 296 middle schools (MDESE, 2022). According to the 2021-2022 Missouri Comprehensive Data System (MDESE, 2022), there were 43 junior high school principals, 376 middle school principals, and 560 high school principals.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) (2022) stated that federal law "requires schools to ensure that LGBTQI+ students and other students have equal access to all aspects of a school's programs and activities" (para. 2). The U.S. Department of Education released a statement on June 13, 2021, announcing that the U.S. Supreme Court had upheld that the Title IX of Education Amendments of 1972 bans discrimination of students based on sexual orientation and gender identity in all public schools. A year after this announcement, the U.S. Department of Education (2022) also proposed changes to the Title IX regulations that would further strengthen protections for LGBTQ+ students, stating, "The regulations will require that all students receive

appropriate supports in accessing all aspects of education. They will strengthen protections for LGBTQI+ students who face discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity” (U.S. Department of Education, 2022, para. 3). In response to this announcement, Tennessee’s attorney general, along with 19 other states’ attorneys general, including Kansas’s and Missouri’s, filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission maintaining it violated states’ current laws prohibiting transgender individuals from participating in sports not aligned with their biological sex (Alliance Defending Freedom, n.d.). Per the Federal Register Notice of Interpretation, the U.S. Department of Education provided the following statement regarding the implementation of the Title IX law:

Pursuant to a Federal court order, the Department has been preliminarily enjoined and restrained from implementing this document against the states of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, South Carolina, South Dakota, and West Virginia. (Enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 With Respect to Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Light of *Bostock v. Clayton County* 2021, p. 32637)

Although clarity may be needed to fully understand if the federal Title IX law protects LGBTQ+ students from discrimination in Kansas and Missouri, current laws in both states require school districts to adopt anti-bullying policies prohibiting bullying (U.S. Department of HHS, 2021b, 2021c). However, neither state requires specific groups of students, including but not limited to LGBTQ+ students, to be identified within

their policy development. Missouri state law further dictates that school district “policies must treat all students equally and shall not contain specific lists of protected classes of students who are to receive special treatment” (U.S. Department of HHS, 2021c). Kansas has no such limitations.

Boyland et al.’s (2018) findings indicate that implementing research-based practices may impact the protection and support of LGBTQ+ students from bullying and discrimination. Therefore, Boyland et al. (2018) identified the following 10 researched-based practices that school leaders could implement to support and protect LGBTQ+ students:

1. Implement and enforce comprehensive anti-bullying policies that enumerate sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.
2. Provide a system that allows students to anonymously report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents.
3. Provide ongoing communication of anti-bullying expectations to the school community.
4. Ensure that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances).
5. Model and expect staff to intervene in support of LGBTQ students.
6. Support the establishment of a Gay-Straight Alliance or similar student clubs.
7. Ensure that LGBTQ students know where to go for information and support, and that supportive staff and services are in place.

8. Implement an inclusive curriculum (curriculum that positively represents minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events).
 9. Establish procedures for logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms).
 10. Provide staff training on preventing LGBTQ harassment and discrimination.
- (pp. 116-119)

Statement of the Problem

Although research exists on school safety issues for LGBTQ+ students (Crocco, 2002; Greytak et al., 2016; Jones, 2014), research on how school principals perceive they have implemented comprehensive research-based practices that create supportive and inclusive school climates for LGBTQ+ students is lacking. To better understand how Indiana middle school principals implement research-based practices, Boyland et al. (2018) conducted a study to comprehend this phenomenon. Their research focused on how middle school principals in Indiana implement policies and practices supporting LGBTQ middle school students and if that implementation had any statistical relationship between principals' reports of bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students in their schools. Although their research provided further understanding of this phenomenon, the research was limited to one state and one education level. Therefore, it is essential to investigate whether principals from other states and levels implement supportive research-based practices that create school climates that are inclusive of LGBTQ+ students and if implementing those practices is related to bullying and discrimination in their schools.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which policies and research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are being implemented in Kansas and Missouri secondary schools. The second purpose of this study was to determine whether Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. The final purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools.

Significance of the Study

The lack of research on how secondary principals implement comprehensive research-based practices to support and protect LGBTQ+ students provides an opportunity for this researcher to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. The results from this study might also support Kansas and Missouri secondary school principals in understanding how the implementation of research-based practices relates to bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students in their schools. Finally, the study results could assist secondary school principals in determining ways to develop school environments that are inclusive, supportive, and protective of LGBTQ+ students.

Delimitations

To ensure clarity and focus on the purpose of a research study, Lunenburg and Irby (2008) suggested that researchers apply self-imposed boundaries, or delimitations, in their studies. Below are the delimitations of this study.

- The researcher limited the study to Kansas and Missouri secondary school principals leading schools with students enrolled in Grades 7-12.

- The researcher used an online system to collect survey data for the study.
- The period in which the survey data was collected was limited to January 24, 2023, through April 1, 2023.

Assumptions

According to Everitt and Skrondal (2010), assumptions are the “conditions under which statistical techniques give valid results” (p. 23). Therefore, the following assumptions were established to ensure valid results for this study:

- Participants who completed the online survey had sufficient knowledge of the topic and understood each survey item.
- Participants answered each survey item accurately based on their knowledge of their buildings.
- Participants responded to the survey items honestly.

Research Questions

This study was conducted to address the following research questions regarding Kansas and Missouri secondary principals’ perceptions of implementing research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students and if bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools.

RQ1

To what extent do Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are implemented in their schools?

RQ2

To what extent do Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools?

RQ3

To what extent do Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools?

Definition of Terms

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) suggested that key terms used throughout a researcher's dissertation should be defined. The following terms are defined for this study.

Bullying

U.S. Department of HHS (2022) defined bullying as “unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time” (para. 1). The U.S. Department of HHS (2022) further identified three specific types of bullying: verbal, social, and physical. The American Psychological Association (APA, n.d.) defined bullying as “persistent threatening and aggressive physical behavior or verbal abuse directed toward other people, especially those who are younger, smaller, weaker, or in some other situation of relative disadvantage” (para. 1). For this study, the author used bullying and harassment interchangeably in some cases.

Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policies

According to Kosciw et al. (2022), comprehensive anti-bullying policies are those that “explicitly enumerate protections based on personal characteristics and include both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression” (p. 56).

Cyberbullying

Bullying occurring over digital devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets has been defined as cyberbullying. It can occur through SMS, text messages, apps, online, or social media platforms (U.S. Department of HHS, 2021d). “Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation” (U.S. Department of HHS, 2021d, para. 1). The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok; text messages and messaging apps; online forums, and email (U.S. Department of HHS, 2021d).

Discrimination

APA (2021) defined discrimination as the “differential treatment of the members of different gender, racial, ethnic, religious, national, or other groups. Discrimination is usually the behavioral manifestation of prejudice and therefore involves negative, hostile, and injurious treatment of the members of rejected groups” (p. 12).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer + (LGBTQ+)

According to the Human Rights Campaign (n.d.), LGBTQ+ is an acronym that is defined as “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer” with a “+” sign to recognize the limitless sexual orientations and gender identities used by members of the LGBTQ+ community.

LGBTQ+-Inclusive Curriculum or Curricula

According to Kosciw et al. (2022), an LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum includes lessons with positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, and events (Kosciw et

al., 2022). An LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum also includes resources such as textbooks and library resources that include LGBTQ+ topics. Finally, an LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum includes LGBTQ+ topics in sexual education classes (Kosciw et al., 2022).

Research-Based Practices

Boyland et al. (2018) “identified practices cited as effective by researchers and recommended for implementation” (p. 116). For this study, these practices are considered research-based practices. Research-based practices have multiple research studies conducted on them, with some research studies demonstrating positive effects on student outcomes (IRIS Center, 2022).

Rural

Ratcliffe et al. (2016) defined a rural territory as an area that “is not urban – that is, after defining individual urban areas, rural is what is left” (p. 1). Rural areas may include towns, which Ratcliffe et al. (2016) defined as a territory inside an urbanized cluster (2,500-49,999 people).

Secondary principals

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.), secondary education in the United States (U.S.) is divided into a lower secondary level, including Grades 7 through 9, and an upper secondary level, including Grades 10 through 12. For this study, secondary school principals are those who serve students in Grades 7 through 12.

Suburban

Ratcliffe et al. (2016) stated that a suburban territory is inside an urbanized area (50,000 or more people) and outside a principal city.

Supportive Students Clubs (Gay-Straight Alliances; Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs)

According to Kosciw et al. (2022),

Supportive student clubs for LGBTQ+ students, often known as Gay-Straight Alliances or Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs), can provide LGBTQ+ students in particular with a safe and affirming space within a school environment that they may otherwise experience as hostile. GSAs may also provide leadership opportunities for students and potential avenues for creating positive school change. (p. 48)

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provided the introduction to the study, including the background, problem statement, purpose, significance, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and the definition of terms. Found in Chapter 2 is a review of the literature significant to the study's purpose and aligned research questions. Chapter 3 includes the research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis and hypothesis testing, and limitations. Presented in Chapter 4 are the descriptive statistics, the results of the hypothesis testing, and the results of the additional analyses. Finally, provided in Chapter 5 are the study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The researcher established three purposes for this study. First, the researcher wanted to determine the extent to which policies and research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are being implemented in Kansas and Missouri secondary schools. Second, the researcher sought to determine whether Kansas and Missouri secondary principals report that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. Finally, the researcher wanted to determine the extent to which Kansas and Missouri secondary principals report that discrimination against LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. Therefore, the literature review was used to establish the fundamental rationale for this study and help address the problem statement, provide possible answers to the research questions, and establish the hypotheses for this study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The literature review includes issues LGBTQ+ students face in school, bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students, and research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students in schools.

Issues LGBTQ+ Students Face in School

LGBTQ+ students, or students perceived to be LGBTQ+, face various issues in the school setting (Crocco, 2002; Greytak et al., 2016; Kosciw et al., 2020, 2022; Sherriff et al., 2011). Students who identified as LGBTQ+ were more vulnerable and three times more likely to feel unsafe at school, and they were more likely to be harassed and assaulted compared to their non-LGBTQ+ peers (Greytak et al., 2016). One type of problematic behavior LGBTQ+ students experience frequently is biased language, including anti-LGBTQ+ remarks, homophobic epithets, or microaggressions (Greytak et

al., 2016; Kosciw et al., 2022; McCabe et al., 2013; Palmer et al., 2012). Bullying and harassment are other concerns many LGBTQ+ students regularly experience in school (American Federation of Teachers, 2016; Greytak et al., 2016; Kosciw et al., 2020, 2022). Discrimination of LGBTQ+ students is another problem seen at a higher rate than those of their non-LGBTQ+ peers (Boyland et al., 2016; Kosciw et al., 2022; Palmer et al., 2012). Most students, LGBTQ+ or not, will not experience an inclusive curriculum incorporating LGBTQ+ content, including historical events and influential LGBTQ+ figures (Greytak et al., 2016; Jaekel, 2017; Kosciw et al., 2022; Palmer et al., 2012). Although many school districts and schools have anti-bullying policies, many lack specific language protecting LGBTQ+ students (Greytak et al., 2016; Jaekel, 2017; Kosciw et al., 2020, 2022).

Although supportive clubs, such as a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), were more readily available to students at the high school level, Kosciw et al. (2020) and Kosciw et al. (2022) indicated that middle school students and students attending religious schools were unlikely to have similar access to such organizations. GSAs were also less prevalent in rural schools than in urban ones (Palmer et al., 2012; Kosciw et al., 2022). Finally, many teachers and school leaders believe they have not been adequately trained or have the necessary tools to adequately support LGBTQ+ students (Greytak et al., 2016; Kosciw et al., 2020, 2022; Wyatt et al., 2008). Although this issue does not directly involve LGBTQ+ students, the indirect implications of the lack of training and tools directly impact students. Each of the preceding issues LGBTQ+ students may face in school is discussed in further detail in this section.

LGBTQ+ Students' Perceptions of Bullying and Discrimination

U.S. Department of HHS (2022) defined bullying as “unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time” (para. 1). The U.S. Department of HHS further identified three types of bullying: verbal, social, and physical. “Verbal bullying involves students saying or writing mean things, including teasing, name-calling, taunting, inappropriate sexual comments, or threats to harm others” (U.S. Department of HHS, 2022, Types of Bullying section). When students hurt another person’s reputation or relationships with other students, they commit social bullying. Social bullying can also include purposefully leaving others out, spreading rumors, and embarrassing people in public (U.S. Department of HHS, 2022). “Physical bullying encompasses hurting a person’s body or personal property, including hitting, kicking, punching, tripping, or pushing; breaking someone’s property; and making inappropriate hand gestures” (U.S. Department of HHS, 2022, Types of Bullying section). Finally, cyberbullying is another form of bullying over digital devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets. It can occur through SMS, text messages, apps, online, or social media platforms (U.S. Department of HHS, 2021d).

Although most bullying occurs in school during the day, bullying occurs after school hours in places such as on the bus and in the community (U.S. Department of HHS, 2022). Approximately 22% of 12-18-year-old students, who completed the 2019 School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, reported being bullied at school during the school year, and “16% of students in Grades 9-12 reported being electronically bullied during the previous 12 months” (Irwin et al., 2022,

p. 8). Comparatively, students in Grades 6-8 reported being bullied at school during the school year at a higher rate of about 28% (Irwin et al., 2022). The SCS survey data also included the percentage comparisons for bullying in city, suburban, town, and rural school locales. The results indicate that students were bullied at a higher rate in rural school locations (28%) than in other locations (Irwin et al., 2022). Although this study included critical insights and data on bullying in schools, it did not provide data specific to the bullying of LGBTQ+ students.

GLSEN responded to the lack of national data specific to LGBTQ+ students' school experiences by developing the NSCS, which has been conducted every two years since 1999 (Kosciw et al., 2022). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the different learning environments students experienced during the 2020-2021 school year, GLSEN asked LGBTQ+ students who were in-person for part of or the whole year about their experiences with in-person harassment and assault in the 2021 NSCS. The results of the survey showed that most participants (83.1%) experienced some type of bullying, including harassment or assault, based on their sexual orientation, actual or perceived gender identity, religion, race, and ethnicity, and actual or perceived disability (Kosciw et al., 2022). The results also indicated that LGBTQ+ students experienced three types of bullying as defined by the HHS: verbal, social, and physical.

Verbal bullying includes biased language, one of the more persistent harmful elements in a school climate for LGBTQ+ students, and can include homophobic, racist, or sexist statements (Palmer et al., 2012). Greytak et al. (2016) furthered this sentiment by stating that this type of language can damage students' feelings about themselves and create an unwelcoming school atmosphere resulting in a negative learning experience.

Although the biased language may not be directed at anyone, it “can reveal more widespread, persistent, and often implicit beliefs about students and their identities, and thus, it can create a negative school climate for many students” (Greytak et al., 2016, p. 13).

Homophobic remarks, including using the word “gay” in a negative way, such as “that is so gay” or “you are so gay,” was the most common type of homophobic remark reported by Greytak et al. (2016) with 55% of students reporting hearing such remarks often or very often. According to Palmer et al. (2012), homophobic remarks using “gay” in a negative way were also reported by almost all the students (97%) in their study of LGBTQ+ students in rural schools. LGBTQ+ students also reported high rates of homophobic remarks using “gay” negatively in the 2021 GLSEN NSCS, with 68% of participants indicating hearing such statements (Kosciw et al., 2022). More offensive homophobic words such as “faggot,” “dyke,” and “queer” directed specifically toward LGBTQ+ students by other students were also reported. Palmer et al. (2012) indicated that 94% of rural LGBTQ+ students heard such terms (e.g., faggot, dyke, and queer) being used sometimes, often, or frequently. Greytak et al. (2016) found that 42.9% of students reported hearing those same homophobic remarks toward LGBTQ+ students often or frequently. In the 2021 National School Climate study, 44.2% of LGBTQ+ students also reported hearing those same negative, homophobic remarks (Kosciw et al., 2022).

Although significant incidences of biased language used by students happen in schools, there are also incidences of biased language being used by school staff. In an earlier study, Palmer et al. (2012) found that 25% of rural students had reported hearing

school staff members using homophobic remarks, and 35% reported hearing staff use negative comments about gender expression sometimes, often, or frequently. Later, Greytak et al. (2016) reported that students heard biased language from staff and teachers. Greytak et al. (2016) also reported that 16.4% of students reported hearing staff using homophobic language, such as “that is so gay,” and 15.3% of the students reported staff using other homophobic references. Students also reported that 25.5% of teachers and staff used negative remarks about students’ gender expression. In a recent study, Kosciw et al. (2022) saw a much more significant increase in LGBTQ+ students reporting staff using homophobic remarks (58%), and almost 72% of students hearing staff use negative comments about students’ gender expression.

When looking at the results from the 2019 GLSEN NSCS for Kansas, most LGBTQ+ students regularly (sometimes, often, or frequently) heard anti-LGBTQ remarks (GLSEN, 2021a). According to the findings, 91% of LGBTQ+ students heard other students use the word “gay” negatively (e.g., that is so gay), while 77% of Kansas LGBTQ+ students heard more offensive homophobic remarks such as “fag” or “dyke” by other students (GLSEN, 2021a). Negative comments were regularly (sometimes, often, or frequently) heard about gender expression and transgender people at a high rate, with 82% of respondents hearing negative remarks about gender expression and 71% about transgender people (GLSEN, 2021a). Kansas LGBTQ+ students also “regularly heard school staff make homophobic remarks (18%) and negative remarks about someone’s gender expression (37%)” (GLSEN, 2021a, para. 2).

According to the 2019 GLSEN NSCS, Missouri had comparable findings with most LGBTQ+ students regularly (sometimes, often, or frequently) hearing anti-LGBTQ

remarks, with 92% of participants hearing “gay” used negatively (e.g., “that is so gay”) and 81% hearing more aggressive homophobic remarks such as “fag” and “dyke” (GLSEN, 2021b). Missouri LGBTQ+ students heard higher rates of negative remarks regularly (sometimes, often, or frequently) about gender expression (79%) and transgender people (76%) (GLSEN, 2021b). Missouri LGBTQ+ students also “regularly heard school staff make homophobic remarks (20%) and negative remarks about someone’s gender expression (37%)” (GLSEN, 2021b, para. 2).

During the 2020-2021 school year, most LGBTQ+ students (76.1%) experienced verbal bullying and harassment, including but not limited to name-calling and threats, based on their sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity at some point in the year. However, 28.9% reported being verbally bullied often or frequently based on three characteristics (sexual orientation, gender, and gender expression) (Kosciw et al., 2022). When exploring the frequency of verbal harassment further, 60.7% of LGBTQ+ students reported experiencing verbal harassment based on their sexual orientation, 51.3% on their gender, and 57.4 % on their gender expression in the past year. LGBTQ+ students reported they were verbally bullied often or frequently based on their sexual orientation at a rate of 16.6%, 16% for gender, and 18% for gender expression (Kosciw et al., 2022).

LGBTQ+ students also reported physical harassment. Kosciw et al. (2022) found that 31.2% of LGBTQ+ students reported they had been physically bullied, including but not limited to pushing or shoving, based on their sexual orientation, gender, or gender expression at some point in the 2020-2021 school year. When further investigating the frequency of physical harassment, Kosciw et al. (2022) noted that the following percentages of LGBTQ+ students reported they were physically harassed at some point in

the 2020-2021 school year: 22.4% based on their sexual orientation, 20.5% based on their gender, and 20.6% based on their gender expression. Compared to the frequency rate of often and frequently, 4.4% of LGBTQ+ students reported they were physically bullied based on their sexual orientation, 4.4% on their gender, and 4.5% on their gender expression.

The GLSEN climate survey included items that measured LGBTQ+ students' reports of physical damage to personal property and theft. The results showed that about one-third of LGBTQ+ students (36.4%) experienced their property stolen or damaged while attending in-person learning. When looking at more frequent events, those that occurred often or frequently, 4.2% of LGBTQ+ students shared that their personal property had been stolen or physically damaged (Kosciw et al., 2022).

When examining physical assault in school during 2020-2021, 12.5% of LGBTQ+ students reported being physically assaulted, including being punched, kicked, or injured with a weapon, based on the same three characteristics of sexual orientation, gender, and gender expression (Kosciw et al., 2022). Though physical assault occurs less than verbal or physical bullying and harassment, it is a “more serious form of victimization” (Kosciw et al., 2022, p. 20). The frequency rates of LGBTQ+ students reporting physical assault are also low based on three characteristics: 8.8% based on sexual orientation, 8.3% based on gender, and 8.2% based on gender expression (Kosciw et al., 2022).

As it relates to social bullying, Kosciw et al. (2022) utilized the term relational aggression, which is “relational forms of aggression that can damage peer relationships, such as spreading rumors or excluding students from peer activities” (p. 23). A majority

of survey participants (86.2%) reported being excluded from activities by other students at some point in the school year. In comparison, 44.1% of the participants reported they had been excluded from activities often or frequently (Kosciw et al., 2022). The results also indicated that 62.3% of LGBTQ+ students reported that other students shared mean lies or rumors about them at school. In comparison, 19.2% reported having rumors and lies shared about them often or frequently (Kosciw et al., 2022). Students who attended in-person schooling during the 2020-2021 school year experienced higher rates of relational aggression than those in online or hybrid learning environments (Kosciw et al., 2022).

Cyberbullying was another form of bullying measured by the GLSEN climate survey. The survey item was included for those students who attended school online at any point in the 2020-2021 school year (Kosciw et al., 2022). Participants were asked if they experienced any harassment or threats via electronic media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and text message) outside of school. The results indicated that 52.8% of students who attended school only online and 50.4% who attended a combination of both online and in-person experienced some cyberbullying (Kosciw et al., 2022). Text and private messaging on social media platforms were the most common communication types for cyberbullying.

The 2019 GLSEN NSCS for Kansas results showed that most LGBTQ+ students faced anti-LGBTQ+ victimization at school (GLSEN, 2021a). Results showed that 73% of LGBTQ+ students reported being verbally harassed, 27% physically harassed, and 10% physically assaulted based on their sexual orientation in the past few years. Anti-LGBTQ+ victimization based on gender expression was also reported, with 60% of

respondents saying they were verbally harassed, 22% physically harassed, and 7% physically assaulted (GLSEN, 2021a). LGBTQ+ students were also victimized based on gender (57% verbally harassed, 26% physically harassed, and 9% physically assaulted) (GLSEN, 2021a).

GLSEN found similar results about anti-LGBTQ+ victimization at school in their 2019 NSCS for Missouri. A majority (75%) of Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported being verbally harassed, 28% physically harassed, and 11% physically assaulted based on their sexual orientation in the past few years (GLSEN, 2021b). Missouri LGBTQ+ students also attested that anti-LGBTQ+ victimization based on gender expression occurred, with 57% of participants saying they were verbally harassed, 21% physically harassed, and 9% physically assaulted (GLSEN, 2021b). Finally, Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported being victimized based on gender (55% verbally harassed, 21% physically harassed, and 7% physically assaulted) (GLSEN, 2021b).

Bullying and harassment can negatively impact students' mental health, academic performance, and physical health (U.S. Department of HHS, 2021a). As previously noted, LGBTQ+ students reported that they are bullied and experienced the negative impacts of bullying at a higher rate. LGBTQ+ students who were bullied due to their sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender were more likely to miss school, feel less belonging in the school community, perform poorer in academics, and have lower levels of self-esteem (Kosciw et al., 2022).

Discrimination of LGBTQ+ students in schools is another problem seen at a higher rate than those of their non-LGBTQ+ peers (Boyland et al., 2016; Kosciw et al., 2022; Palmer et al., 2012). Throughout their school experiences, LGBTQ+ "students may

experience discriminatory policies and practices related to their actual or perceived LGBTQ+ identities” (Kosciw et al., 2022, p. 32). Examples of discriminatory school policies and practices toward LGBTQ+ students may include: restricting LGBTQ+ expression, preventing LGBTQ+ students from accessing or using facilities associated with their gender identity, limiting or omitting LGBTQ+ students from activities based on their identities, and being disciplined for behaviors or actions that would not be disciplined if they involved non-LGBTQ+ students (Kosciw et al., 2022). The results of the GLSEN 2021 NSCS indicated that 58.9% of LGBTQ+ students reported personally experiencing discriminatory policies or practices toward LGBTQ+ students at school (Kosciw et al., 2022). Further description and analysis of discriminatory school policies and practices toward LGBTQ+ students are explored later in this chapter.

Secondary Principals’ Perceptions of Bullying and Discrimination

As stated in the previous section, LGBTQ+ students reported high rates of bullying and discrimination in their schools. However, it is vital to understand if the perceptions of secondary principals are comparable. Therefore, GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) conducted a collaborative quantitative survey-based study, The Principal Perspective, with 1,508 K-12 principals across the United States. The aim of the study was to understand principals’ perspectives on bullying, awareness of LGBTQ+ students’ experiences, efforts to decrease bullying, and resources available to LGBTQ+ students within their schools (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). The results of the study indicated that at that time, 33% of secondary principals felt that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students would feel very safe in their school, and 24% felt that a transgender student would feel very safe in their school (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). The

results indicated that 57% of secondary principals described bullying, name-calling, and harassment as very or somewhat serious issues in their schools. Bullying, name-calling, and harassment were more widespread in junior high/middle school, with 75% of principals reporting bullying as a very or somewhat serious problem (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008).

GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) found that most secondary principals heard verbal bullying, including biased language with anti-LGBTQ+ remarks in their schools. According to their findings, 98% of secondary principals heard sexist remarks, 96% heard homophobic epithets such as “that is so gay” or “you are so gay,” and 96% of secondary principals heard more aggressive homophobic remarks such as “faggot,” “dyke,” and “queer” (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). When looking at principals’ perceptions regarding frequent or very frequent bullying and harassment, 17% of middle school principals and 8% of senior high school principals reported that students were bullied based on their masculinity or femininity. In comparison, 10% of middle school principals and 10% of senior high school principals shared that students were bullied based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). Unfortunately, the GLSEN and Harris Interactive study did not include specific data regarding the types of physical bullying or assault experienced by LGBTQ+ students. However, they did include data regarding the frequency of cyberbullying, with 20% of secondary principals reporting that cyberbullying occurred (often or very often) in their schools (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008).

More recently, Boyland et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative survey-based study of Indiana middle school principals (Grades 7 and 8) to determine if they reported

bullying and discrimination against LGBTQ+ students in their schools. Their study used the results of two survey items to determine if bullying and discrimination occurred for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students versus transgender students (Boyland et al., 2018). The results indicated that 51.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students are bullied or discriminated against, while 43.9% agreed or strongly agreed that bullying or discrimination of transgender students occurred at their schools (Boyland et al., 2018). However, Boyland et al.'s (2018) results also indicated that almost half of the principals (44.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that bullying or discrimination of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students occurred in their schools, while 39.2% of principals disagreed or strongly disagreed that bullying or discrimination of transgender or gender diverse students occurs in their schools. An even "larger percentage (16.8%, $n = 18$) of principals responded N/A" on the survey item regarding their perceptions if transgender or gender diverse students are bullied or discriminated against in their schools (Boyland et al., 2018, p. 124). Based on the results of their study, Boyland et al. (2018) validated their findings with previous studies on bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students in schools.

Research-Based Practices for Supporting LGBTQ+ Students

According to the IRIS Center (2022), research-based practices are those practices that have multiple research studies conducted on them, with some results demonstrating positive effects on student outcomes. Boyland et al.'s (2018) findings indicate that implementing research-based practices may impact the protection and support of LGBTQ+ students from bullying and discrimination. Boyland et al. (2018) identified 10 researched-based practices that school leaders could implement to support and protect

LGBTQ+ students (see background section in Chapter 1 for a complete list of practices). Research conducted on student and principal perceptions of the 10 research-based practices identified by Boyland et al. (2018) are explored further in the following sections.

Implementing Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policies for LGBTQ+ Students

According to the GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) study results, 97% of secondary principals reported having anti-bullying policies in place in their schools. However, when principals were asked if they had inclusive anti-bullying policies that specifically named sexual orientation, the results indicated that 54% of secondary principals reported that their anti-bullying policy specifically included sexual orientation (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). The results also showed that more high school principals reported so than middle school principals (56% and 50%, respectively) (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). Principals were also asked if their policies specifically named gender identity or expression, and 44% of secondary principals reported having an anti-bullying policy that named gender identity or expression (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). Similarly, more high school principals than middle school principals reported having anti-bullying policies inclusive of gender identity or expression (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008).

Boyland et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative survey-based study of Indiana middle school principals (Grades 7 and 8) to measure the implementation of anti-bullying policies in those middle school principals' schools and to determine if those policies were enforced and specifically named LGBTQ+ students as protected. Most participants (97.3%) shared that anti-bullying policies are in place in their schools, and 86.7% agreed

or strongly agreed that their anti-bullying policies are enforced (Boyland et al., 2018). When asked if their anti-bullying policies specifically named LGBTQ+ students, the percentage decreased to 60.2% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing. In comparison, 37.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their anti-bullying policies specifically named LGBTQ+ students as protected (Boyland et al., 2018). In this study, Boyland et al. shared that their results were more hopeful than those of students' responses on the 2015 GLSEN NSCS, where 6% of Indiana students reported their schools had anti-bullying policies that specifically named LGBTQ+ students (Boyland et al., 2018).

Beginning in 1996, the CDC conducted the School Health Profiles to “monitor school health policies and practices in secondary schools in states and school districts across the United States” (CDC, 2019, p. vi). School Health Profiles are biennial self-administered questionnaire surveys (paper-pencil or web-based systems) provided to secondary school principals and lead health education teachers (CDC, 2019). The surveys are administered in even-numbered years to collect data on “health education requirements and content, physical education and activity, safe and supportive environments, health services, and school health coordination” (CDC, 2019, p. vi).

The 2018 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019) survey did not include a survey question regarding implementing a comprehensive anti-bullying policy that named LGBTQ+ students. However, a survey item was included to measure secondary schools' engagement in a specific practice related to LGBTQ+ students: prohibiting harassment based on sexual orientation. The national results indicated that 96.1% of respondents engaged in the practice of prohibiting harassment of LGBTQ+ students in their schools

(CDC, 2019). The national results stayed relatively consistent in the 2020 School Health Profiles at 96.7% (CDC, 2022). According to the 2018 Kansas and Missouri School Health Profiles results, 96.1% of Kansas participants and 95.1% of Missouri participants reported they implemented the practice of prohibiting harassment of LGBTQ+ students in their schools (CDC, 2019). Kansas participants' percentage decreased on that item in the 2020 School Health Profiles to 94.3%, while the Missouri percentage increased to 97.5% (CDC, 2022).

In 2019, GLSEN conducted the NSCS, an online bi-annual quantitative survey-based study, to understand the frequency of hostile school climate indicators for LGBTQ+ students (Kosciw et al., 2020). One of the indicators measured in the study was LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of their schools' implementation of comprehensive anti-bullying policies that specifically name LGBTQ+ student populations. According to the study, 79.1% of student participants reported that their schools had an anti-bullying school policy in place (Kosciw et al., 2020). However, 13.5% reported having a comprehensive anti-bullying policy that included LGBTQ+ student populations for both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression included in the policy (Kosciw et al., 2020).

GLSEN (2021a) developed a state snapshot companion document to the 2019 GLSEN NSCS, which included specific data for each state to understand the frequency of hostile school climate indicators for LGBTQ+ students. Based on the 2019 Kansas State Snapshot results (GLSEN, 2021a), 11% of participants reported having a comprehensive anti-bullying policy specifically including LGBTQ+ students based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and 9% reported having a policy or specific

guidelines for supporting transgender and nonbinary students. According to the Missouri State Snapshot (GLSEN, 2021b) data, 9 % of participants reported having a comprehensive anti-bullying policy specifically including LGBTQ+ students based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and 7% reported having a policy or specific guidelines for supporting transgender and nonbinary students.

In 2021, GLSEN conducted the bi-annual NSCS. Like the 2019 NSCS, the 2021 NSCS (Kosciw et al., 2022) included an indicator measuring LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of their schools' implementation of comprehensive anti-bullying policies, specifically naming LGBTQ+ student populations. Kosciw et al. (2022) reported slight decreases between the 2019 NSCS and the 2021 NSCS, where 76.1% of LGBTQ+ student participants reported having an anti-bullying policy at their school. Similar decreases also occurred with the percentage of LGBTQ+ students (12.0%) reporting having a comprehensive anti-bullying policy which includes both sexual orientation and gender identity from 2019 (13.5%) to 2021 (12.0%) (Kosciw et al., 2022).

GLSEN again created state snapshot companion documents to the 2021 NSCS, which included specific data related to 43 states. Based on the Kansas State Snapshot results, 9.0% of Kansas LGBTQ+ students reported attending a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying policy that specifically named sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (GLSEN, 2023a). Similarly, 9.0% of Kansas LGBTQ+ students reported having policies or guidelines to support transgender or non-binary students (GLSEN, 2023a). According to the results of the Missouri State Snapshot, fewer Missouri LGBTQ+ students (6.0%) reported attending a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying policy named sexual orientation and gender identity and expression

(GLSEN, 2023b). Likewise, only 4.0% of Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported their school having a policy or guidelines to support transgender or non-binary students (GLSEN, 2023b).

System for Anonymous Reporting of Bullying, Harassment, or Discriminatory Incidents

In the GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) study, the researchers included a survey item related to school districts' safe school and anti-bullying policies. In that item, principals were asked if "procedures for students to report incidents of bullying or harassment" (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008, p. 48) were included in their anti-bullying policy. The results indicated that 84% of all secondary principals indicated that procedures for reporting bullying and harassment were included in their policies (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). More middle school principals (89%) reported having procedures in place compared to their high school counterparts (81%) (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008).

As part of their quantitative survey-based study of Indiana middle school principals, Boyland et al. (2018) measured principals' perceptions of having systems for anonymous reporting of bullying and discrimination established in their schools. In the study, 113 principals responded to the survey item regarding establishing anonymous systems for reporting bullying and discrimination (Boyland et al., 2018). The results of Boyland et al. (2018) indicated that principals' responses "fell within the agree range ($M = 3.41$)" (p. 125).

The CDC measured secondary principals' and lead health teachers' implementation of practices that support the prevention of bullying and sexual

harassment in their schools as part of the School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019, 2022). One of those practices was the designation of a staff member to whom students can confidentially report bullying and sexual harassment. According to the 2018 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019) national results, 96.1% of respondents reported having a designated staff member for students to report bullying and sexual harassment. A minimal decrease to 95.9% was seen in the 2020 School Health Profiles results on this survey item. The Kansas and Missouri 2018 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019) indicated that 89.6% and 97.9% of participants had designated a staff member to whom students could come to report bullying and sexual harassment confidentially. While the percentage of Kansas respondents increased to 92.9% on this exact item in 2020, Missouri's percentage decreased to 97.0% (CDC, 2022).

Although the 2019 GLSEN NSCS (Kosciw et al., 2020) did not specifically collect data regarding students' perceptions of the implementation of anonymous systems for reporting bullying, harassment, or discriminatory incidents, data from this study may indicate why students hesitated to use such systems. Kosciw et al. (2020) stated the following factors impacted LGBTQ+ students' decision to report bullying, harassment, or discriminatory incidents: doubted the effectiveness of the intervention; feared the response would make the situation worse; concerned about approaching school staff; did not think the harassment was severe enough; handled the situation themselves; other reasons. Most LGBTQ+ students (56.6%) who were bullied or assaulted stated they did not report it because they did not believe effective intervention would happen or would make the situation worse (Kosciw et al., 2020). When LGBTQ+ students reported bullying, 60.5% of participants reported that school staff did nothing to intervene or told

the student to ignore the situation (Kosciw et al., 2020). According to Kosciw et al. (2020), staff were more likely to intervene when the schools implemented comprehensive anti-bullying policies.

Similarly, Kosciw et al. (2022) did not measure LGBTQ+ students' perceptions on implementing anonymous systems for reporting bullying in the 2021 GLSEN NSCS; however, the data collected helps indicate why LGBTQ+ students may have been hesitant to report issues of bullying and harassment. Like the 2019 NSCS data, the 2022 NSCS (Kosciw et al., 2022) data indicated some of the following reasons why LGBTQ+ students were resistant to reporting bullying: doubted if school staff would do anything, suspected that interventions would be ineffective, were too embarrassed to report, feared being perceived as a "snitch" or tattler, or other reason. According to the 2021 GLSEN NSCS (Kosciw et al., 2022) results, most bullied LGBTQ+ students (69.6%) did not report the incidents because they doubted school staff would do anything. The results of the 2021 GLSEN NSCS (Kosciw et al., 2022) indicated that when LGBTQ+ students did report the incidents, 60.3% of students stated that staff did nothing to stop it or told the students to ignore the problem, which is similar to the 2019 survey results.

Communicating Anti-bullying Expectations to the School Community

Implementation of practices to reduce bullying and harassment in schools was also measured in the GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) study. One specific practice measured was the implementation of awareness campaigns, including posters, contests, and special events (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). The results related to that item indicated that 55% of secondary principals implemented anti-bullying awareness campaigns (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). When asked if anti-bullying awareness

campaigns were impactful in reducing bullying and harassment, 38% of secondary principals reported them as helpful, with more middle school principals (43%) reporting the campaign's effectiveness (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008).

Boyland et al. (2018) also measured Indiana middle school principals' perceptions of communicating anti-bullying expectations with their school community. In their study, Boyland et al. had 113 principals respond to the survey item related to communicating anti-bullying expectations to the school community. The results from the study indicated that principals' responses "fell within the agree range ($M=3.33$)" (Boyland et al., 2018, p. 125).

As part of the School Health Profiles, the CDC measured secondary principals' and lead health teachers' implementation of practices that support the prevention of bullying and sexual harassment in their schools (CDC, 2019, 2022). One practice included communicating bullying and sexual harassment expectations with the school community using electronic, paper, or oral communication to announce policies and rules on bullying and sexual harassment (CDC, 2019, 2022). According to the 2018 School Health Profile (CDC, 2019) national results, 95.4% of respondents reported that bullying and sexual harassment policies and expectations were communicated through electronic, paper, or oral communication. A slight increase occurred in the 2020 School Health Profile (CDC, 2022), with 96.9% reporting that communication methods were in place to disseminate bullying and sexual harassment policy information in place. Kansas and Missouri results for this item indicated that 94.5% of Kansas and 98.1% of Missouri respondents reported digital, paper, or oral communication of bullying and sexual harassment policies in place in 2018 (CDC, 2019). In 2020, 96.1% of Kansas participants

and 98.6% of Missouri participants reported digital, paper, or oral communication of bullying and sexual harassment policies in place (CDC, 2022).

The CDC also measured secondary principals' and lead health teachers' implementation of providing "parents and families with health information on preventing bullying and sexual harassment" in their schools using the School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019, p. 40; CDC, 2022, p. 25). In 2018, the School Health Profile (CDC, 2019) national results revealed that 63.7% of secondary principals and lead health teachers provided parents with information about preventing bullying and sexual harassment, slightly increasing in 2020 to 64.0% (CDC, 2022). According to the 2018 School Health Profiles results, 53.7% of Kansas and 59.4% of Missouri principals and lead health teachers reported providing parents with information about preventing bullying and sexual harassment (CDC, 2019). However, the 2020 School Health Profiles results indicate slight increases to 61.6% of Kansas and 63.1% of Missouri secondary principals and lead health teachers providing parents with information about preventing bullying and sexual harassment (CDC, 2022).

Ensuring Non-Discriminatory School Policies and Practices for LGBTQ+ Students

GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) measured if principals perceived that including anti-discrimination policies that explicitly protect LGBTQ+ students create safe school environments for LGBTQ+ students. According to the results, 67% of secondary principals believed that the inclusion of specific protections for LGBTQ+ students in anti-discrimination policies was extremely or very helpful (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). High school principals had a slightly higher percentage (71%) than middle and

junior high school principals (66%), who reported that the addition of LGBTQ+ students in anti-discrimination policies was helpful (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008).

Boyland et al.'s (2018) quantitative survey-based study of Indiana middle school principals also included measuring principals' perceptions of ensuring non-discriminatory school policies and practices are in place for LGBTQ+ students in their schools. When reviewing this specific survey item, 112 principals responded. The results indicated that principals' responses "fell within the agreement range $M = 3.42$ " (Boyland et al., 2018, p. 125).

One of the indicators measured in Kosciw et al.'s (2020) study was LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of experiencing LGBTQ-related discriminatory policies or practices in their schools. The study's results indicated that 59.1% of LGBTQ+ students reported personally experiencing discriminatory policies or practices at their school (Kosciw et al., 2020). Discriminatory policies and practices reported by LGBTQ+ students included being punished for same-sex displays of affection (28.0%), banned from engaging in discussions or writings about LGBTQ+ topics (16.6%), prohibited from wearing clothing or items supporting LGBTQ+ issues (10.7%), prohibited from bringing same-sex dates to school events such as dances (7.6%), and being unfairly punished for being LGBTQ+ (3.0%) (Kosciw et al., 2020). Specific discriminatory practices or policies participants reported geared toward transgender and nonbinary students included preventing LGBTQ+ students from using restrooms or locker rooms based on their aligned gender identity (28.4%), preventing LGBTQ+ students from using their chosen name or pronouns (22.8%), and preventing LGBTQ+ students from wearing clothing based on their gender identity (18.3%) (Kosciw et al., 2020).

According to the 2019 Kansas State Snapshot (GLSEN, 2021a), 63.0% of Kansas LGBTQ+ students also reported experiencing LGBTQ-related discriminatory policies or practices in their schools. Discriminatory policies and practices reported by Kansas LGBTQ+ students included being reprimanded for public displays of affection (31.0%), unable to wear LGBTQ-supportive clothing (10%), unable to bring a same-sex date to a school dance (8.0%), and being disciplined for being LGBTQ+ (1.0%) (GLSEN, 2021a). Kansas transgender and non-binary students also reported discriminatory policies or practices specific to their gender identity, which included preventing LGBTQ+ students from using restrooms or locker rooms based on their aligned gender identity (63.0%) and preventing LGBTQ+ students from using their chosen name or pronouns (43%) (GLSEN, 2021a).

Similarly, 69.0% of Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported experiencing discriminatory practices and policies (GLSEN, 2021b). According to the results of the 2019 GLSEN Missouri State Snapshot (GLSEN, 2021b), 35.0% of LGBTQ+ students reported being reprimanded for public displays of affection, 18% of LGBTQ+ students reported being unable to wear LGBTQ-supportive clothing, 9.0% of LGBTQ+ students reported being unable to bring a same-sex date to a school dance, and 3.0% being disciplined for being LGBTQ+. Missouri transgender and non-binary students reported discriminatory policies or practices specific to their gender identity, which included preventing LGBTQ+ students from using restrooms or locker rooms based on their aligned gender identity (77.0%) and preventing LGBTQ+ students from using their chosen name or pronouns (58%) (GLSEN, 2021b).

Like the 2019 NSCS, the 2021 NSCS (Kosciw et al., 2022) included an indicator measuring LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of experiencing LGBTQ-related discriminatory policies or practices in their schools. According to Kosciw et al. (2022), 58.9% of LGBTQ+ students experienced LGBTQ-related discriminatory practices in their schools. LGBTQ-related discriminatory policies and practices included being disciplined for same-sex displays of affection (25.2%), prohibited from engaging in LGBTQ-related discussions or writings (16.6%), banned from wearing supportive clothing for LGBTQ+ issues (12.3%), prevented from forming GSAs (12.3%), and discouraged from participating in athletics (11.3%) (Kosciw et al., 2022). Transgender and non-binary students also experienced discriminatory policies and practices based on their aligned gender identity (Kosciw et al., 2022). Some discriminatory policies and practices include being stopped from using restrooms (27.2%) or locker rooms (23.8%) based on their aligned gender identity, being prevented from using their chosen name or pronouns based on their transgender and non-binary identities (29.2%), and prohibiting LGBTQ+ students from wearing clothing based on their gender identity (20.6%) (Kosciw et al., 2022).

The CDC used the School Health Profiles (2022) survey to measure secondary principals' and lead health teachers' implementation of the following inclusive practices when providing sexual education classes: "encouraged the use of gender-neutral pronouns such as "they/them" during instruction and encouraged students to respect others' sexual and gender identities" (CDC, 2022, p. 96). The national results from the first practice revealed that 52.6% of secondary principals and lead health teachers encouraged using gender-neutral pronouns during instruction (CDC, 2022). However, the

results of Kansas and Missouri were much lower, with 29.5% of Kansas and 33.8% of Missouri secondary principals and lead health teachers reporting they encourage the use of gender-neutral pronouns during instruction (CDC, 2022). Finally, 77.2% of all secondary principals and lead health teachers who responded to the survey agreed that they encouraged students to respect others' sexual and gender identities (CDC, 2022). Although lower than the national percentage, a higher percentage of Kansas (65.2%) and Missouri (76.8%) secondary principals shared that they encouraged students to respect others' gender and sexual identities (CDC, 2022).

Specific data regarding Kansas LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of experiencing LGBTQ-related discriminatory policies or practices in their schools was collected from the 2021 GLSEN NSCS. In the 2021 Kansas GLSEN State Snapshot, GLSEN (2023a) indicated that 63.0% of LGBTQ+ students reported the following discriminatory policies and practices: reprimanded for public displays of affection (33.0%), prohibited from writing or discussing LGBTQ+-related topics in class (22.0%), stopped from wearing LGBTQ-supportive clothing (10.0%), and being disciplined for being LGBTQ+ (4.0%). Results from the 2021 Missouri GLSEN Snapshot (GLSEN, 2023b) were slightly higher than those of Kansas with 71.0% of LGBTQ+ students reporting having experienced anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination. Anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination experiences included being reprimanded for public displays of affection (28.0%), prohibited from writing or discussing LGBTQ+-related topics in class (18.0%), stopped from wearing LGBTQ-supportive clothing (15.0%), and being disciplined for being LGBTQ+ (5.0%). Transgender and non-binary students in both Kansas and Missouri reported discriminatory policies or practices specific to their gender identity. Discriminatory

policies or practices for transgender and non-binary students included preventing students from using restrooms (Kansas 48.0%; Missouri 49.0%) and locker rooms (Kansas 44.0%; Missouri 47.0%) based on their aligned gender identity, prohibiting LGBTQ+ students from using their chosen name or pronouns (Kansas 48.0%; Missouri 51.5%), and blocking students from playing on athletic teams aligned with their gender identity (Kansas 27.0%; Missouri 27.0%) (GLSEN, 2023a, 2023b).

Modeling Staff Intervention for Supporting LGBTQ+ Students

GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) also measured whether principals believed implementing certain practices would help create safer school environments for LGBTQ+ students. Principals were asked if having clear consequences for school staff who did not intervene when they witnessed LGBTQ+ students getting bullied or hearing homophobic remarks would help create a safer school environment for LGBTQ+ students (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). Over half of the secondary principals (69%) reported that having clear consequences for school staff who did not intervene would help ensure a safer school environment for LGBTQ+ students (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). Although GLSEN & Harris Interactive (2008) did not measure if principals model staff intervention for supporting LGBTQ+ students, this item supports the idea that principals should and will intervene when staff does not support bullied or harassed LGBTQ+ students.

Boyland et al. (2018) measured Indiana middle school principals' perceptions of modeling how they and their staff intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students. According to Boyland et al.'s (2018) findings, 108 principals responded to the survey item related to

this issue. According to the results of the study, principals' responses "fell within the agree range ($M = 3.32$)" (Boyland et al., 2018, p. 125).

In 2019, GLSEN conducted the NSCS, an online bi-annual quantitative survey-based study, to understand the frequency of hostile school climate indicators for LGBTQ+ students (Kosciw et al., 2020). One of the indicators measured in the study was LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of staff intervening to support LGBTQ+ students. Kosciw et al. (2020) define staff as "teachers, principals, and other school staff" (p. 61). According to Kosciw et al. (2020), 35.7% of LGBTQ+ students shared that school staff was present when other students made homophobic remarks; however, 13.7% of LGBTQ+ students "reported that school staff intervened most of the time or always" when they overheard those remarks (p. xix). In comparison, 9.0% of LGBTQ+ students reported "staff intervening most of the time or always when hearing negative remarks about gender expression" (Kosciw et al., 2020, p. xix). As stated in an earlier section regarding systems of reporting bullying and assault, 56.6% of participants who had been harassed or assaulted in school did not report the incident because of their concern that the intervention would be effective or that the situation would become worse (Kosciw et al., 2020). Although staff intervention was low, Kosciw et al. (2020) stated that staff intervention was more prevalent in schools that implemented comprehensive anti-bullying policies, with 25.3% of LGBTQ+ students reporting that staff intervened most of the time or always in those schools.

In 2021, GLSEN conducted the bi-annual NSCS to measure further the frequency of hostile school climate indicators for LGBTQ+ students. Kosciw et al. (2022) again included an indicator measuring LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of staff intervening to

support LGBTQ+ students. Kosciw et al. (2022) defined school staff as “teachers, principals, and other staff” (p. 51). According to the study results, 31.7% of LGBTQ+ students reported that school staff was present when other students used homophobic remarks. Kosciw et al. reported that 10.9% of LGBTQ+ students indicated that staff did anything to intervene most of the time or always (Kosciw et al., 2022). More LGBTQ+ students “(50.3%) reported that staff never intervened when hearing homophobic remarks” (Kosciw et al., 2022, p. 17). Over a quarter of LGBTQ+ students (30.8%) also reported that staff was present when other students used gender-biased remarks. Kosciw et al. reported that 8.8% of LGBTQ+ students sharing that staff intervened most of the time or always. For staff intervention rates to increase, Kosciw et al. recommend that schools put comprehensive bullying policies in place and provide staff with necessary professional development.

Supporting Gay-Straight Alliances and Similar Clubs

As part of their study, GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) also measured if principals implemented student groups, such as GSAs, diversity clubs, or anti-violence groups, to help reduce bullying or harassment in their schools. Only 34% of secondary principals reported having implemented such groups, with more high school principals (49%) than middle and junior high school principals (34%) doing so (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). When asked if implementing these types of clubs and student groups helped create safer school environments for LGBTQ+ students, 55% of secondary principals responded that it was extremely or very helpful (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). Again, more high school principals (65%) than middle and junior high school

principals (39%) perceived that these clubs and groups were extremely or very helpful (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008).

Boyland et al. (2018) also measured Indiana middle school principals' perceptions of the availability of GSAs or similar clubs for LGBTQ+ students in their schools.

Boyland et al. had 113 principals respond to this survey item. The results from the study indicated that principals' responses "indicated disagreement ($M=1.93$)" (Boyland et al., 2018, p. 125).

The CDC conducted the School Health Profiles in 2018 and 2022. As part of their study, the CDC measured secondary principals' and lead health teachers' perceptions of engaging in specific practices related to LGBTQ+ youth. One of those practices was the establishment of GSAs or similar clubs. According to the 2018 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019) national results, 36.8% of respondents reported having GSAs or similar clubs in their schools. An increase in the establishment of GSAs and similar clubs was seen in the 2020 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2022), with 43.7% of respondents reporting having GSAs in their schools. Conversely, Kansas and Missouri saw lower percentages of secondary principals and lead health teachers reporting that GSAs or similar clubs were established in their schools in both 2018 (Kansas 28.3% and Missouri 28.0%) and 2020 (Kansas 31.7% and Missouri 30.9%) (CDC, 2019, 2022).

One of the indicators measured in Kosciw et al.'s (2020) study was LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of the availability of school-based resources, including Gay-Straight Alliances or Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs). According to Kosciw et al. (2020), 61.6% of LGBTQ+ students reported having a GSA or similar club available in their schools. However, over one-third of LGBTQ+ students reported not having a GSA

or similar club at their school (Kosciw et al., 2020). Middle school LGBTQ+ students were less likely than their high school LGBTQ+ peers to have access to GSAs or similar clubs in their schools (Kosciw et al., 2020). Of the LGBTQ+ students who reported having a GSA or similar club, the majority (61.8%) shared that they participated in the club, while 38.2% of LGBTQ+ students reporting they did not participate. Kosciw et al. (2020) stated that in schools where GSAs were established, LGBTQ+ students experienced safer, more positive school climates. Kosciw et al. (2020) also stated that staff in schools with GSAs more frequently intervened when homophobic or negative remarks about gender expression were used than staff in schools without GSAs.

The 2019 GLSEN State Snapshots for Kansas and Missouri included the results for the availability of GSAs or similar clubs that provide a supportive space for LGBTQ+ students to meet and discuss issues that impact them (GLSEN, 2021a, 2021b). The results of the Kansas State Snapshot (GLSEN, 2021a) indicate that 63.0% of Kansas LGBTQ+ students reported having access to a GSA or similar club available at their schools. Similarly, the Missouri State Snapshot (GLSEN, 2021b) results indicate that 61.0% of Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported having a GSA or similar club available at their school.

Kosciw et al. (2022) measured LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of the availability of supportive school-based resources, including GSAs or similar clubs, again in 2021 with the GLSEN NSCS. Based on Kosciw et al.'s results, the number of LGBTQ+ students stating that GSAs or similar clubs were available in their schools decreased significantly from 61.6% in 2019 to 34.8% during the 2020-2021 school year. The percentage of students reporting participating in GSAs also declined considerably from

61.8% in 2019 to 47.8% in 2021 (Kosciw et al., 2022). In response to those decreases, Kosciw et al. (2022) stated that “it is possible that extracurricular activities in general were curtailed in the 2020–2021 academic years because of COVID restrictions, which could explain this sharp decline” (p. 121). Like the results of the 2019 NSCS, Kosciw et al. reported that middle school LGBTQ+ students were less likely to have access to GSAs or similar clubs than their high school LGBTQ+ peers.

The 2021 GLSEN State Snapshots (GLSEN, 2023a, 2023b) for Kansas and Missouri included results regarding LGBTQ+ students’ perceptions of the availability of GSAs or similar clubs within their schools. GSAs or similar clubs provide students with a safe space for LGBTQ+ students promoting a more welcoming and positive school climate (GLSEN, 2023a, 2023b). The results of the Kansas State Snapshot indicated that 37.0% of Kansas LGBTQ+ students reported having access to a GSA or similar club. Missouri State Snapshot results indicated that 27% of LGBTQ+ students reported having access to a GSA or similar club (GLSEN, 2023b). These percentages are down significantly from the 2019 State Snapshots for Kansas and Missouri, which GLSEN notes could have been caused by significant disruptions due to COVID-19 (GLSEN, 2023a, 2023b).

Ensuring Supportive Measures, Information, and Staff are in Place for LGBTQ+ Students

GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) surveyed principals on whether they believed having principals more openly address safety issues for LGBTQ+ students and supporting teachers and other staff who act on these items helped create safer school environments for LGBTQ+ students. The study results indicated that 66% of secondary

principals agreed that having principals who address safety issues of LGBTQ+ students and support staff to put the proper measures in place to act on safety issues was extremely or very helpful (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008). Like the results of other practices measured, GLSEN and Harris Interactive found that more high school principals (70%) believed having principals address the safety concerns of LGBTQ+ students and supporting staff to act on those issues was helpful compared to their middle and junior high school counterparts (62%).

Boyland et al.'s (2018) quantitative survey-based study of Indiana middle school principals also included measuring principals' perceptions of ensuring supportive measures, information, and staff are in place for LGBTQ+ students. According to Boyland et al., 107 principals responded to this survey item. The results from Boyland et al.'s study indicate that principals' responses "fell within the agree range ($M = 3.42$)" (p. 125).

In 2018 and 2020, the CDC measured the percentage of secondary schools that engaged in specific practices related to LGBTQ+ youth in their schools. Specifically, the CDC measured if secondary schools facilitated access to providers not on school property who have experience in providing health services to LGBTQ+ students as well as providing social and psychological support to LGBTQ+ students (CDC, 2019, 2022). According to the national results of the School Health Profiles, in 2018, 76.5% of schools facilitated access to providers off school grounds to provide health support for LGBTQ+ students (CDC, 2019) and 81.3% in 2020 (CDC, 2022). Kansas and Missouri results were lower than the national average for this practice in both 2018 (Kansas 42.3% and Missouri 49.5%) and 2020 (Kansas 49.7% and Missouri 53.5%) (CDC, 2019, 2022). The

CDC had similar findings for the national results for facilitating access to providers not on school grounds for social and psychological support for LGBTQ+ youth. In 2018, 59.0% of secondary principals and lead health teachers reported facilitating access to outside social and psychological supports for LGBTQ+ students, and 61.6% in 2020 (CDC, 2019, 2022). The findings for this practice in Kansas were also lower than the national percentage, with 48.6% of Kansas respondents in 2018 and 55.5% in 2020 agreeing that they facilitated outside access to social and psychological support for LGBTQ+ youth (CDC, 2019, 2022). Missouri had slightly higher percentages in 2018 and 2020 than Kansas, with 54.1% of Missouri participants in 2018 and 59.3% in 2020 (CDC, 2019; CDC, 2022).

The CDC also surveyed secondary principals and lead health teachers to determine if they identified safe spaces in their schools as a practice related to LGBTQ+ youth. The 2018 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019) national results revealed that 78.5% of participants identified safe spaces in their schools for LGBTQ+ students. The 2020 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2022) slightly increased this item to 82.4%. Missouri had similar results in 2018 and 2020 to national percentages, 73.6% and 83.2%, respectively (CDC, 2019; CDC, 2022). Finally, Kansas had lower results than the nation and Missouri, with 66.8% of Kansas participants in 2018 and 71.0% in 2020 sharing that they had identified safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students in their schools (CDC, 2019; CDC, 2022).

In the 2020 School Health Profiles, the CDC measured secondary principals' and lead health teachers' implementation of the following two inclusive practices when providing sexual education classes: "provided students with information about LGBT

resources within the school and identified additional LGBT resources available in the community or online” (CDC, 2022, p. 96). National results showed that 50.6% of participants said they “provided students with information about LGBT resources within the school,” and 42.9% “identified additional LGBT resources available in the community or online” (CDC, 2022, p. 96). Kansas participants reported much lower percentages for both items, with 26.1% sharing that they provided LGBT resources within the school, and 16.5% identified LGBT resources for students outside the school (CDC, 2022). Likewise, Missouri had lower percentages than the nation, with 34.1% of Missouri respondents stating that they provided students with LGBT resources in school and 21.5% identifying further LGBT resources in the community or online (CDC, 2022).

Beyond having GSAs or other similar clubs, another indicator measured in Kosciw et al.’s (2020) study was LGBTQ+ students’ perceptions of the availability of supportive school-based resources such as supportive staff, including “teachers, principals, and other staff” (p. 61) as well as designated safe spaces identified by stickers or posters. According to the results of the study, nearly all LGBTQ+ students (97.7%) reported having at least one supportive staff member of LGBTQ+ students at their school; however, 66.3% of LGBTQ+ students reported having at least six supportive staff members in their schools (Kosciw et al., 2020). The number of participants who reported having 11 or more supportive staff decreased to 42.3%. When looking at the results related to LGBTQ+ supportive administrators in schools, less than half (42.4%) of the participants reported that their school had somewhat or very supportive school administrators (Kosciw et al., 2020). Finally, over half of the LGBTQ+ students reported seeing at least one safe space sticker or poster, which often assisted students with

knowing which staff were supportive of LGBTQ+ students (Kosciw et al., 2020).

According to Kosciw et al., 56.1% of LGBTQ+ students who had seen safe space stickers or posters in their schools could also identify more supportive staff (11 or more).

Compared to high school LGBTQ+ students, middle school LGBTQ+ students were less likely to have supportive staff and administration and less likely to see safe space stickers and posters in their schools (Kosciw et al., 2020).

The 2019 GLSEN State Snapshots for Kansas and Missouri included specific data regarding the indicator of LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of the availability of supportive school-based resources such as supportive staff and administration. The results of the 2019 GLSEN Kansas State Snapshot indicated that 99.0% of the Kansas LGBTQ+ student participants reported having at least one school staff member who supported LGBTQ+ students, while 64.0% reported having six or more LGBTQ+ supportive staff members (GLSEN, 2021a). Although Kansas LGBTQ+ students had higher reports of school staff who supported LGBTQ+ students, they did not perceive school administrators to be as supportive of LGBTQ+ students, with 39.0% of students saying they have supportive administrators (GLSEN, 2021a). The 2019 GLSEN State Snapshot for Missouri had similar findings regarding Missouri LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of supportive school staff and administration. The results of the Missouri snapshot indicated that 97.0% of LGBTQ+ students reported having at least one supportive school staff member, and 64.0% had six or more supportive staff members available (GLSEN, 2021b). The results also indicated that even fewer Missouri LGBTQ+ students (35.0%) reported access to supportive school administrators (GLSEN, 2021b).

As part of the GLSEN's 2021 NSCS, Kosciw et al. (2022) again measured LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of the availability of school-based resources, such as supportive staff and designated safe spaces identified by stickers or posters. Although the number of LGBTQ+ students reporting having at least one support staff member in their school has remained high (96.3%), that number dropped by slightly over one percent from 2019 (Kosciw et al., 2022). Similarly, the number of LGBTQ+ students reporting they have six or more supportive staff in their school dropped from 2019 (66.3%) to 2021 (58.2%) (Kosciw et al., 2022). LGBTQ+ students were also asked if they perceived their school administrators as supportive of LGBTQ+ students. Kosciw et al. (2022) define a school administrator as a "principal or vice principal" (p. 51). According to Kosciw et al. (2022), 36.6% of LGBTQ+ students reported their school administrator as "very or somewhat supportive," and 23.7% of respondents reported their school administrator as "very or somewhat unsupportive" (p. 51). Kosciw et al. (2022) shared the following clarification about LGBTQ+ students' neutral responses:

It is important to note that over a third of students (39.7%) indicated that their administration was neutral. This may signify administration that has not been actively supportive or unsupportive regarding LGBTQ+ students. It may also signify that students are unsure of their administration's stance on LGBTQ+ issues, perhaps because they have not been at all vocal about LGBTQ+ student issues. (pp. 51-52)

According to Kosciw et al. (2022), safe space stickers assist students with identifying staff who provide supportive spaces for LGBTQ+ students. Over half of LGBTQ+ students (51.6%) reported seeing at least one safe space sticker in their schools

(Kosciw et al., 2022). Like the 2019 NSCS results, middle school students were less likely to have supportive staff members and safe spaces designated in their schools (Kosciw et al., 2022).

To accompany the 2021 GLSEN NSCS, the state snapshots were created to provide specific results for states. The State Snapshots for Kansas and Missouri included perceptions of LGBTQ+ students regarding the availability of supportive staff and administration for LGBTQ+ students. According to the results of the 2021 State Snapshots, 97.0% of both Kansas and Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported having at least one LGBTQ+ supportive staff member they could identify within their school (GLSEN, 2023a, 2023b). However, 57.0% of Kansas and 51.0% of Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported being able to identify six or more LGBTQ+ supportive staff members in their schools (GLSEN, 2023a, 2023b). The results of Kansas LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of the availability of supportive administrators were lower, with 30.0% of Kansas LGBTQ+ students reporting "that their school administration was somewhat or very supportive of LGBTQ+ students" (GLSEN, 2023a, p. 3). Similarly, 25.5% of Missouri LGBTQ+ reported having somewhat or very supportive school administration (GLSEN, 2023b).

Implementing Inclusive Curricula

To understand if principals perceived that implementing information about LGBTQ+ people, history, and events within the curriculum helped support safer school environments for LGBTQ+ students, GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) added a survey item to collect that data. According to their results, GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) found that 41% of principals agreed that implementing an inclusive curriculum

incorporating LGBTQ+ people, history, and events was extremely or very helpful in creating a safe school environment for LGBTQ+ students. This study did not specifically address secondary principals' actual implementation of LGBTQ+-inclusive curricula.

In Boyland et al.'s (2018) quantitative survey-based study of Indiana middle school principals, the researchers also measured principals' perceptions of implementing inclusive curricula in their schools. Of the principals who responded ($n = 113$) to the survey item related to implementing inclusive curricula, principals' responses "indicated disagreement ($M = 2.08$)" (Boyland et al., 2018, p. 125). There is a possibility that principals disagree that an inclusive curriculum is implemented because of the lack of training provided to teachers (Boyland et al., 2018).

Kosciw et al. (2020) also researched the perception of LGBTQ+ students' availability to an inclusive curriculum that taught positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, and events in their schools. Kosciw et al.'s results indicated that 19.4% of LGBTQ+ students reported having an inclusive curriculum taught at their schools, and 17.0% of LGBTQ+ students reported having negative content about LGBTQ+ topics taught. Kosciw et al. (2020) also studied the perceptions of LGBTQ+ students' availability of an LGBTQ-inclusive sexual education curriculum, indicating that 8.2% of LGBTQ+ students reported having that available. Under half of LGBTQ+ students (48.9%) reported that their school library had LGBTQ-related issues, and a little over half of LGBTQ+ students (55.9%) reported having the ability to access the internet to search for LGBTQ-related information on their school computers (Kosciw et al., 2020).

When examining the results of the GLSEN 2019 State Snapshots (2021a), 12.0% of Kansas LGBTQ+ student participants reported they were taught an inclusive

curriculum with “positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, and events” (p. 2). Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported a slightly higher rate, with 14.0% reporting they were taught “positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, and events” with an inclusive curriculum (GLSEN, 2021b, p. 2). Fewer students in both Kansas and Missouri reported being taught LGBTQ-inclusive sex education, 2.0% and 3.0%, respectively (GLSEN, 2021a, 2021b).

CDC researchers measured the percentage of secondary schools’ implementation of curricula or supplementary materials in sexual education courses that were relevant to LGBTQ+ students as part of the 2020 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2022). The national percentage of participants stating that they implemented inclusive curricula or supplemental materials relevant to LGBTQ+ students in sex education classes was 50.9% (CDC, 2022). The CDC found that 34.6% of Kansas secondary principals and lead health teachers shared that they implemented LGBTQ+-inclusive curricula or supplemental materials in their sex education classes, compared to 46.5% of Missouri secondary principals and lead health teachers (CDC, 2022). Researchers with the CDC also studied if secondary principals and lead health teachers provided “positive examples of LGBTQ+ people and same-sex relationships” in their sex education classes (CDC, 2022, p. 96). The national results indicated that 48.4% reported that the practice was implemented (CDC, 2022). Again, Kansas and Missouri’s results were lower than the national percentage, with 21.7% of Kansas and 31.9% of Missouri respondents indicating they provided positive examples of LGBTQ+ people and same-sex relations (CDC, 2022).

As part of the 2021 GLSEN NSCS, Kosciw et al. (2022) measured LGBTQ+ students’ perceptions of having access to an inclusive curriculum with positive

representations of LGBTQ+ people, events, and history. Kosciw et al. (2022) found that 16.3% of LGBTQ+ students reported being taught an inclusive curriculum with positive LGBTQ+ representation, down from the 2019 NSCS results. Of the LGBTQ+ students who responded, 14.4% had been taught negative representations or content about LGBTQ+ issues (Kosciw et al., 2022). Concerning inclusive sex education curriculum, 7.4% of LGBTQ+ students had topics including LGBTQ+ topics (Kosciw et al., 2022). Finally, 42.8% of the respondents shared having access to information on LGBTQ+ topics in the school library, and a little under half (48.2%) of LGBTQ+ students had access to online LGBTQ+ information using school computers (Kosciw et al., 2022).

According to the 2021 GLSEN Kansas snapshot results, 11.0% of Kansas LGBTQ+ students reported teachers teaching an inclusive curriculum with positive LGBTQ+ representation (GLSEN, 2023a). An even lower percentage of Kansas LGBTQ+ students (5.0%) reported being taught an inclusive sex education curriculum with LGBTQ+ topics (GLSEN, 2023a). Similar results were reported by Missouri LGBTQ+ students in the GLSEN Missouri snapshot, with 12.0% of participants reporting having been taught with an inclusive curriculum (GLSEN, 2023b). Also, 4.0% of Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported being taught an inclusive sex education curriculum with LGBTQ+ topics.

Procedures for Handling and Supervising Susceptible Areas

Boyland et al. (2018) measured Indiana middle school principals' perceptions of implementing procedures for handling and supervising susceptible areas. According to Boyland et al. (2018), 108 principals responded to the survey item related to this issue.

According to the results of the study, principals' responses "fell within the agreement range ($M = 3.16$)" (Boyland et al., 2018, p. 125).

Although Kosciw et al. (2020) did not specifically address the perceptions of LGBTQ+ students regarding procedures for handling and supervising susceptible areas, they did measure LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of avoided school spaces where victimization or discrimination occurred. The results of the 2019 NSCS indicated 45.25% of LGBTQ+ participants felt unsafe or uncomfortable in bathrooms (45.2%), locker rooms (43.7%), and physical education (P.E.) or gym classes (40.2%)" (Kosciw et al., 2020, p. 16). Also, 25.1% reported they "avoided school athletic fields or facilities because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable" (Kosciw et al, 2020, p. 16). The researchers concluded that transgender and non-binary youth tended to avoid sex-segregated (i.e., bathrooms and locker rooms) spaces more than other LGBTQ+ students.

Kosciw et al. (2022) authored the GLSEN 2021 NSCS, which again measured LGBTQ+ students' perceptions regarding spaces they deemed unsafe due to victimization and discrimination. The results of the 2021 NSCS indicated that LGBTQ+ students reported the following school spaces as unsafe: bathrooms (45.1%), locker rooms (42.6%), and P.E. or gym classes (39.4%) (Kosciw et al., 2022). Additionally, 78.8% of LGBTQ+ students reported not participating in school events or extracurricular activities due to feeling unsafe or uncomfortable about being LGBTQ+ (Kosciw et al., 2022). Other spaces reported as being unsafe for LGBTQ+ students were athletic fields or facilities (24.3%) and cafeterias (22.2%) (Kosciw et al., 2022).

Staff Training on LGBTQ+ Harassment and Discrimination Prevention

GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) also measured if training or professional development was provided to school staff to help reduce bullying in their schools. The results of GLSEN and Harris Interactive's (2008) study showed that 70% of secondary principals provided professional development related to reducing bullying in their schools. However, when asked if mandatory LGBTQ+-inclusive professional development was provided based on their school's anti-bullying policies, results declined to 46% inclusive of grade levels of principals agreeing with that statement (GLSEN and Harris Interactive, 2008). Also measured by GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) were the types of professional development provided by the school or district. GLSEN and Harris Interactive found that 41% of secondary principals had some diversity or multicultural training provided to staff. Of the participants, 6% of secondary principals shared that LGBTQ+ issues training was provided to staff. Finally, GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) found that the "principals whose schools provided professional development on bullying reported that it included specific content on students' sexual orientation (30%) or students' gender identity/expression (24%)" (p. 52).

Boyland et al. (2018) reported that 108 principals responded to the survey item about principals' perceptions of school personnel receiving training on preventing harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students in their schools. Based on the principals' responses, data "indicated disagreement ($M = 2.31$)" (Boyland et al., 2018, p. 125). According to Boyland et al., there is a possibility that because principals disagreed that staff is trained on LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination training, there could be an impact on how they responded to inclusive curricula implementation.

Using the 2018 and 2020 School Health Profiles surveys, the CDC measured secondary principals and lead health teachers' perceptions on if "all school staff received professional development on preventing, identifying, and responding to student bullying and sexual harassment" regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity (CDC, 2019, p. 40; CDC, 2022, p. 25). Based on national results, 90.0% of participants in 2018 and 91.4% in 2020 shared that all staff was provided professional development to help prevent and respond to bullying and sexual harassment (CDC, 2019, 2022). Likewise, the 2018 and 2020 School Health Profiles included survey outcomes for Kansas and Missouri. Interestingly, the results for both states were higher than that of the nation, with 93.4% of 2018 Kansas participants and 95.5% in 2020 stating that all staff had professional development on identifying and preventing bullying and sexual harassment. Missouri had slightly higher results than Kansas, with 97.6% in 2018 and 98.5% in 2020 (CDC, 2019, 2022).

Although the 2019 NSCS (Kosciw et al., 2020) did not include specific data related to LGBTQ+ students' perceptions of staff receiving the necessary professional development or training needed to support LGBTQ+ students, the researchers did share specific topics that should be considered when training school staff. Kosciw et al. (2020) stated that merely training staff about bullying and harassment may not be enough to support school staff with how to address LGBTQ+ discrimination effectively. Therefore, Kosciw et al. (2020) suggested that professional development and training should be on issues associated with LGBTQ students and bias-based bullying and harassment. Biased-based bullying and harassment training can better equip school staff with the tools to intervene effectively in LGBTQ+ bullying situations (Kosciw et al., 2020). Another

suggested training topic for school staff was teacher policy training (Kosciw et al., 2020). Policy training should include topics related to clothing-related discrimination, effective implementation of policies, and any mandates related to protections for transgender and non-binary students (Kosciw et al., 2020).

Again, Kosciw et al. (2022) shared professional development and training recommendations for school staff to support the prevention of bullying and discrimination against LGBTQ+ students. Specifically, Kosciw et al. suggested training school staff on appropriately intervening when students make homophobic and anti-LGBTQ+ remarks. The researchers also suggested that school staff receive training on appropriately intervening when LGBTQ+ students are harassed or assaulted (Kosciw et al., 2022). According to Kosciw et al. (2022),

Training all members of the school community to be sensitive to LGBTQ+ student issues and effectively respond to bullying and harassment could increase the likelihood of reporting by students who are victimized at school. Such efforts could, in turn, improve school climate for all students. (p. 28)

Finally, the CDC (2022) used the 2020 School Health Profiles to measure whether secondary principals and lead health teachers believed school staff received professional development to support LGBTQ+ students. National results for this survey item indicated that 29.9% of respondents believed their school staff received professional development to support LGBTQ+ students (CDC, 2022). Kansas (23.2%) and Missouri (23.5%) both saw lower percentages of secondary principals and lead health teachers reporting that staff received LGBTQ+ support professional development compared to national results (CDC, 2022).

Summary

This chapter included a comprehensive literature review on issues faced by LGBTQ+ students in school, bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students, and research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students in schools. This comprehensive review allowed the researcher to review the perceptions of LGBTQ+ students and secondary principals related to bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students. The review also allowed for a deeper understanding of secondary principals' perceptions on whether research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are being implemented to best support LGBTQ+ students from bullying and discrimination. Emerging themes from this review included the discrepancy between perceptions of students and secondary principals related to bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students in schools and the varied implementation of research-based practices for supporting and protecting LGBTQ+ students. Finally, the literature review allowed the researcher to compare survey results conducted in Kansas and Missouri to previous studies conducted in both states and those across the United States. The next chapter will provide information on the research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis, hypothesis testing, and limitations of this study.

Chapter 3

Methods

As stated in Chapter 1, there is a lack of research on whether school principals perceive they have implemented comprehensive research-based practices that create supportive and inclusive school climates for LGBTQ+ students. Therefore, this study had three purposes, the first of which was to determine the extent policies and research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are being implemented in Kansas and Missouri secondary schools. The second was to determine whether Kansas and Missouri secondary principals report that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. The third and final purpose was to determine the extent to which Kansas and Missouri secondary principals report that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. To better understand the methodology of this study, this chapter is organized into the following sections: research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection, data analysis and hypotheses testing, and limitations.

Research Design

A quantitative design utilizing survey research methods was used to gather the perceptions of secondary principals in Kansas and Missouri on the extent to which they agree that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are implemented in their schools and the extent to which they agree that bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occur at their school. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that a “survey design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population, or tests for associations among variables of a population, by studying a sample of that population” (p. 147). The variables of interest in this study were the

perceptions of Kansas and Missouri secondary principals that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are being implemented in their schools, the perceptions that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools, and the perceptions that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools.

Selection of Participants

The population for this study encompassed secondary principals in Kansas and Missouri. Purposive sampling was used because the sample was “based on the researcher’s experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 175). Principals listed in the MODESE and KSDE databases with valid email addresses were invited to participate in this study. Principals were selected if their schools included any of the Grades 7-12. By choosing to participate in the study, principals self-selected to complete the anonymous survey. For principals to be eligible to be a part of the sample, they must have been in their current role for the 2022-2023 school year.

Measurement

The researcher used components of a previously established survey created by Boyland et al. (2018) entitled Principal Survey Regarding Policies and Practices Supporting LGBTQ Students. Permission to use and modify the survey was requested on June 17, 2022, and was granted by Boyland on June 18, 2022 (see Appendix A). Boyland et al.’s original survey included 61 items in four sections, including principal demographics, experience and feedback regarding policies and practices, perception of school community members’ attitudes about LGBTQ students, and open-ended questions (see Appendix B). To measure the variables specified in the research questions for this

study, the researcher limited the survey to three sections: principal perceptions regarding implementing research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students, principal perceptions regarding bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students, and principal demographics.

The revised survey includes 18 items in the three sections (see Appendix C). The first section of the survey addresses the principals' perceptions regarding implementing research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students in their schools. The 11 survey items in this section are aligned to RQ1, which includes Boyland et al.'s (2018) research-based practices that school leaders could implement to support and protect LGBTQ+ students (see background section in Chapter 1 for a complete list of practices). The second section includes two questions to address RQ2 and RQ3. The first item in this section addresses principals' perceptions regarding bullying of LGBTQ+ students in their schools, and the second addresses discrimination of LGBTQ+ students in their schools. The third and final section has five items specific to the participants' demographics, including gender, current position, the state in which they work, total years as a secondary principal, and the school community area in which they work (rural, town, suburban, or city). The five items in section three are not used for hypothesis testing but are utilized for the study's descriptive statistics.

As stated, Boyland et al.'s (2018) Principal Survey Regarding Policies and Practices Supporting LGBTQ Students was revised to develop a survey that met the needs of the researcher's study. Item numbers the researcher used and adjusted from Boyland et al.'s original survey to create the survey items for this study are found in

Table 1. All other items from Boyland et al.'s survey that did not align with this study's purpose and research questions were not included.

Table 1

Original Survey Item Numbers and Revised Items for Current Survey

Numbers	Revised Items
1, 3, 4	1. At the school in which I work, comprehensive anti-bullying policies that specifically name sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are implemented and enforced.
12	2. At the school in which I work, a system is provided that allows students to anonymously report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents.
15	3. At the school in which I work, ongoing communication is provided of anti-bullying expectations to the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians).
18, 19	4. At the school in which I work, it is ensured that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ+ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances).
24, 25, 26	5. At the school in which I work, I model how staff should intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.
24, 25, 26	6. At the school in which I work, staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.
29, 30	7. At the school in which I work, the establishment of gay-straight alliances or similar student clubs are supported.
33	8. At the school in which I work, LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place.
36	9. At the school in which I work, an inclusive curriculum is implemented (curriculum that positively represents minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events).
39	10. At the school in which I work, procedures are established for logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms).
43	11. At the school in which I work, school staff are provided training on preventing LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination.
9, 10	12. Bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs at my school.
21	13. Discrimination of LGBTQ+ occurs at my school.

Study participants responded to each survey statement within sections one and two using a five-point Likert-type scale. Ratings on this scale included 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*agree*), and 5 (*strongly agree*). The alignment of survey items and hypotheses is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Alignment of Survey Items and Hypotheses

Survey Item	Hypothesis
1. At the school in which I work, comprehensive anti-bullying policies that specifically name sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are implemented and enforced.	H1
2. At the school in which I work, a system is provided that allows students to anonymously report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents.	H2
3. At the school in which I work, ongoing communication is provided of anti-bullying expectations to the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians).	H3
4. At the school in which I work, it is ensured that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ+ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances).	H4
5. At the school in which I work, I model how staff should intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.	H5
6. At the school in which I work, staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.	H6
7. At the school in which I work, the establishment of gay-straight alliances or similar student clubs are supported.	H7
8. At the school in which I work, LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place.	H8
9. At the school in which I work, an inclusive curriculum is implemented (curriculum that positively represents minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events).	H9
10. At the school in which I work, procedures are established for logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms).	H10
11. At the school in which I work, school staff are provided training on preventing LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination.	H11
12. Bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs at my school.	H12
13. Discrimination of LGBTQ+ occurs at my school.	H13

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined validity as the degree to which an instrument measures what a researcher asserts it measures. Boyland et al. (2018) used an expert panel to test their instrument's content validity, and the following results were found:

After survey development and before pilot testing, a panel experienced in survey development reviewed the survey and provided feedback regarding face and content validity. This seven-member panel consisted of three university professors, two recently retired principals, and two practicing middle school principals serving in private schools in the state. We decided not to use public school principals on our panel because this would preclude them from participating in the study. Based on the panel's feedback, several wording revisions were made to the survey, which improved clarity and flow. The survey was then pilot tested with a similar panel with favorable results and no additional revisions were made thereafter. (p. 121)

Because modifications were made to Boyland et al.'s (2018) survey, the researcher used an expert panel of former secondary principals to guarantee the survey's content validity. The panel reviewed each survey item for relevance and clarity (see Table 1). Panel participants provided feedback and suggestions on how to ensure item clarity and if any additional survey items were needed to meet the needs of the study. Based on the panel's feedback, the 10 survey items regarding research-based practices were reworded from "At my school, ..." to "At the school in which I work, ..." to ensure participant bias was limited. One panel member shared concern that the word "we" may also be confusing as it may signify the leadership team versus the individual principal. The word "toward" in the bullying and discrimination survey items was changed to the

word “to” to help clarify the item. Three panel experts shared that survey item one was confusing with the word “enumerate” to mean specifically name. Therefore, to help clarify, “enumerate” was eliminated from the survey item only to include “specifically name.” Finally, panel members stated that survey item five (At my school, I model, and staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.) seemed to have two specific areas that needed to be addressed separately. Therefore, item five was divided into two separate items (items five and six) to ensure clarity.

Reliability is the degree to which an instrument consistently measures what it purports to measure (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). By definition, reliability is a characteristic of a scale constructed from multiple items (Sankaran, 2022) and evaluated based on the internal consistency of the responses to those items on the scale. For this study, the survey items were used to individually measure variables.

Most commonly used single-item measures can be divided into two categories: (a) those measuring self-reported facts . . . and (b) those measuring psychological constructs, e.g., aspects of personality . . . measuring the former with single items is common practice. However, using a single-item measure for the latter is considered to be a “fatal error” in research. If the construct being measured is sufficiently narrow or is unambiguous to the respondent, a single item may suffice. (Sackett & Larson, 1990, p. 631)

The individual items used in this research were self-reported facts that were sufficiently narrow and unambiguous. Because no scale was constructed, reliability was not an issue for the measurement using this survey instrument.

Data Collection Procedures

Before collecting data for this study, the researcher submitted a request for approval to the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Permission to conduct this study was formally granted by the Baker University IRB on January 10, 2023 (see Appendix D). Following the IRB approval, all Kansas and Missouri secondary principals were sent a solicitation email on January 24, 2023, using email addresses from the KSDE and MODESE databases. Included in the solicitation email was an embedded link to the online survey, an informational statement about anonymous data collection, details describing the completion and submission of the survey indicating participants' voluntary consent to participate in the study, and contact information for the researcher (see Appendix E). Follow-up reminder emails were sent on February 13, 2023, and March 6, 2023, with requests to complete the survey if principals had not already done so (see Appendix E). A final email request for completing the survey was sent on March 25, 2023 (see Appendix E), and the survey was closed on April 3, 2023. After the survey was closed, data from the online survey system were downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Data were imported into the IBM® SPSS® Statistics Faculty Pack for statistical analysis. The three research questions, corresponding hypotheses, and statistical analysis used to test the hypotheses are presented below.

RQ1

To what extent do Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are implemented in their schools?

H1. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that comprehensive anti-bullying policies that enumerate (specifically name) sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are implemented and enforced at their schools.

H2. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they provide a system that allows students to anonymously report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents.

H3. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they provide ongoing communication of anti-bullying expectations to the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians).

H4. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they ensure that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ+ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances).

H5. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools they model how staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.

H6. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.

H7. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances or similar student clubs at their schools is supported.

H8. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place.

H9. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, an inclusive curriculum is implemented (a curriculum that positively represents minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events).

H10. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, procedures are established for the logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms).

H11. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that school staff are provided training on preventing LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination at their schools.

Eleven one-sample t tests were conducted to test H1-H11. The sample mean for Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are implemented in their schools was compared to a test value of 3 for each of the tests. The one-sample t test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is calculated from a numeric variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as measured by Cohen's d , is reported.

RQ2

To what extent do Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools?

H12. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools.

A one-sample t test was conducted to test H12. The sample mean for Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools was compared to a test value of 3. The one-sample t test was chosen for the

hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is calculated from a numeric variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as measured by Cohen's *d*, is reported.

RQ3

To what extent do Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools?

H13. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools

A one-sample *t* test was conducted to test H13. The sample mean for Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools was compared to a test value of 3. The one-sample *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is calculated from a numeric variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as measured by Cohen's *d*, is reported.

Limitations

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), limitations of a study are those factors that are not within the researcher's control but could influence the meaning of the findings or overall conclusions of the results. One limitation of this study is the honesty of the participants. Unfortunately, the researcher cannot know if the participants responded truthfully. A second limitation is the potential lack of participation by secondary principals due to internal district email servers or personal email settings. All

participants may not have received some emails about the study and survey. A third limitation is the nature of the content, which could have caused some participants not to complete the survey or contribute to this study based on personal biases or opinions about LGBTQ+ students.

Summary

Chapter 3 included the methodology used to conduct this study. The chapter provided a comprehensive review of the research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis and hypotheses testing, and limitations of this study. Chapter 4 provides the descriptive statistics, the results of the hypothesis testing, and the results of the additional analyses.

Chapter 4

Results

The researcher established three purposes for this study. The first purpose was to determine the extent policies and research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are being implemented in Kansas and Missouri secondary schools. The second purpose was to determine whether Kansas and Missouri secondary principals report that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. The last purpose was to determine the extent to which Kansas and Missouri secondary principals report that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. This chapter includes the descriptive statistics collected in the survey, the results of the hypothesis testing, and the additional analyses conducted.

Descriptive Statistics

The survey for this study was sent to 1,627 secondary principals in Kansas and Missouri. The survey link was shared via an initial solicitation email, with three additional emails sent as reminders to attain a larger sample size. After four email attempts, 326 responses were received. Five survey items regarding participants' demographics were analyzed for the study's descriptive statistics, including the state in which they work, years of administrative experience, participants' principal positions, gender, and the school community area in which they work (rural, town, suburban, or city).

Data regarding the state in which survey participants work is presented in Table 3. The data were categorized into two groups, Kansas and Missouri. A little under half of the survey participants worked in Kansas, while a little over half worked in Missouri.

Table 3*Participant State*

State	<i>N</i>	% of Total
Kansas	157	48.2
Missouri	169	51.8

Table 4 shows data regarding the survey participants' years of administrative experience. Participants' years of administrative experience ranged from 0 to 38 years. Due to the numerous and varied responses to this survey item, responses were recoded as ranges for years of experience and organized into seven categories. Responses including half-year increments were rounded to the following whole number (e.g., 2.5 years was rounded to 3 years, and 8.5 years was rounded to 9 years). The other category represents a response of "n/a" and another response that included the respondents' total years of experience, including their years as an assistant principal.

Table 4*Participant Years of Administrative Experience*

Years of Administrative Experience	<i>N</i>	% of Total
0	6	1.8
1-5 years	128	39.3
6-10 years	90	27.6
11-15 years	44	13.5
16 - 20 years	29	8.9
21+ years	27	8.3
Other	2	0.9

Presented in Table 5 are the data regarding the survey participants' principal positions. Recoding was completed for this survey item due to wide-ranging responses and organized into four categories. Survey responses that included principalships supervising grades up through eighth grade were categorized into middle/junior high school (e.g., principal Grades K-8, principal Grades 5-8, middle school principal with Grades 6-8, middle school principal with Grades 7-8, junior high school principal with Grades 7-8, superintendent K-8). The middle/high school category captured survey responses for principals supervising students in Grades kindergarten through 12 (e.g., principal Grades K-12, principal Grades 6-12, principal Grades 7-12, junior/senior high school principal, superintendent/K-12 principal). The high school category includes survey responses from principals serving students from Grades 9 through 12. The other category was used to code responses from teachers, assistant principals, assistant

superintendents, and superintendents. Finally, there was one missing response from a survey participant. Data for the respondents designated other and missing were omitted from the hypothesis testing.

Table 5

Participant Principal Position

Principal Position	<i>N</i>	% of Total
Middle/junior high school	117	35.9
Middle/high school	60	18.4
High school	139	42.6
Other	9	2.8
Missing	1	0.3

Table 6 includes participants' response data regarding their identified gender. The data was organized into three categories, with an additional category for missing data ($N = 1$). According to the responses, 30 more male principals ($N = 173$) responded to the survey than female principals ($N = 143$), and nine participants preferred not to share their gender identity. The nine responses from the participants who preferred not to share their gender identity and the missing entry were included in the hypothesis testing.

Table 6*Participant Gender*

Gender	<i>N</i>	% of Total
Female	143	43.8
Male	173	53.1
Preferred not to provide	9	2.8
Missing	1	0.3

Finally, Table 7 includes data regarding participants' responses for the school community area in which they work. The data were organized into four categories, with an additional category designated for missing responses ($N = 3$). Based on the survey results, the largest category of principals who responded to this survey worked in schools in rural communities (38.0%). In comparison, the next largest category was those principals who worked in schools in town communities (26.1%).

Table 7*Participant Community*

Community	<i>N</i>	% of Total
City	57	17.5
Rural	124	38.0
Suburban	57	17.5
Town	85	26.1
Missing	3	0.9

Hypothesis Testing

Three research questions guided this study. RQ 1 encompassed 11 hypotheses, while research RQ2 and RQ3 comprised one hypothesis apiece. Below, each research question is listed, followed by the hypothesis tests conducted to address the research question, the hypothesis statements, and the results of each hypothesis test.

RQ1

To what extent do Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are implemented in their schools?

Eleven one-sample t tests were conducted to test H1-H11. The sample mean for Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are implemented in their schools was compared to a test value of 3 for each of the tests. The one-sample t test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is calculated from a numeric variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as measured by Cohen's d , is reported.

H1. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that comprehensive anti-bullying policies that enumerate (specifically name) sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are implemented and enforced at their schools.

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H1 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(314) = 8.763$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.494$. The sample mean ($M = 3.581$, $SD = 1.177$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H1 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that comprehensive anti-bullying policies that enumerate (specifically

name) sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are implemented and enforced at their schools. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H2. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they provide a system that allows students to anonymously report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents.

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H2 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(314) = 24.629$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.388$. The sample mean ($M = 4.340$, $SD = 0.965$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H2 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they provide a system that allows students to anonymously report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H3. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they provide ongoing communication of anti-bullying expectations to the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians).

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H3 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(314) = 16.520$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.931$. The sample mean ($M = 3.803$, $SD = 0.863$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H3 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they provide ongoing communication of anti-bullying expectations to the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians). The effect size indicated a large effect.

H4. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they ensure that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ+ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances).

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H4 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(314) = 19.806$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.116$. The sample mean ($M = 4.054$, $SD = 0.944$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H4 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they ensure that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ+ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances). The effect size indicated a large effect.

H5. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools they model how staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H5 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(315) = 27.107$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.525$. The sample mean ($M = 4.196$, $SD = 0.784$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H5 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools they model how staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H6. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H6 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(313) = 23.245$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.312$. The sample mean ($M = 4.137$, $SD = 0.867$) was significantly

higher than the test value (3). H6 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H7. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances or similar student clubs at their schools is supported.

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H7 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(312) = 11.293$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.638$. The sample mean ($M = 3.687$, $SD = 1.076$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H7 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances or similar student clubs at their schools is supported. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H8. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place.

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H8 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(315) = 15.736$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.885$. The sample mean ($M = 3.794$, $SD = 0.897$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H8 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H9. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, an inclusive curriculum is implemented (a curriculum that positively represents minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events).

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H9 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(313) = -1.885$, $p = .030$. The sample mean ($M = 2.895$, $SD = 0.988$) was significantly lower than the test value (3). H9 was not supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree that at their schools, an inclusive curriculum is implemented (a curriculum that positively represents minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events).

H10. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, procedures are established for the logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms).

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H10 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(313) = 12.656$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.714$. The sample mean ($M = 3.691$, $SD = 0.968$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H10 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, procedures are established for the logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms). The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H11. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that school staff are provided training on preventing LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination at their schools.

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H11 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(315) = 4.991$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.281$. The sample mean ($M = 3.304$, $SD = 1.082$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H11 was supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that school staff are provided training on preventing LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination at their schools. The effect size indicated a small effect.

RQ2

To what extent do Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools?

A one-sample t test was conducted to test H12. The sample mean for Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools was compared to a test value of 3. The one-sample t test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is calculated from a numeric variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as measured by Cohen's d , is reported.

H12. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools.

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H12 indicated no statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(312) = -0.162$, $p = .436$. The sample mean ($M = 2.990$, $SD = 1.048$) was not different from the test value (3). H12 was not supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals do not agree or disagree that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools.

RQ3

To what extent do Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools?

A one-sample t test was conducted to test H13. The sample mean for Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools was compared to a test value of 3. The one-sample t test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is calculated from a numeric variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as measured by Cohen's d , is reported.

H13. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools.

The results of the one-sample t test used to test H13 indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(310) = -7.194$, $p = .000$. The sample mean ($M = 2.556$, $SD = 1.088$) was significantly lower than the test value (3). H13 was not supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools.

Additional Analyses

The results of the one-sample t tests used to test H1-H13 yielded mixed results. To better understand the mixed results, the distribution of the responses on the agreement scale for each of the 13 items was examined, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies for the responses to each survey item was constructed. For each test, the observed frequencies

were compared to those expected by chance. The level of significance was set at .05. An effect size, as measured by Cohen's *W*, is reported, when appropriate.

The results of the chi-square tests for these additional analyses were also mixed. For items 1-6 and items 8 and 10, the results indicated that Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree or strongly agree that the research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are in place at their schools. For items 7, 9, and 11, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree, are neutral, or agree that the research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are in place at their schools. For items 12 and 13, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree and agree that bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occur in their schools. The results of the analyses are found in Table 8.

Table 8*Chi-Square Goodness of Fit Results for the Additional Analyses*

Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	E	χ^2	W
1	17	56	41	129	72	63	112.48*	0.598
2	8	16	15	98	178	63	349.02*	1.053
3	3	28	52	177	55	63	285.81*	0.953
4	7	19	33	147	109	63	240.38*	0.874
5	4	5	33	157	117	63.2	308.49*	0.988
6	3	12	45	133	121	62.8	235.49*	0.866
7	9	29	104	80	91	62.6	109.03*	0.590
8	4	30	52	171	59	63.2	259.03*	0.905
9	21	94	110	75	14	62.8	119.09*	0.616
10	10	32	54	167	51	62.8	235.84*	0.867
11	15	71	68	127	35	63.2	115.08*	0.603
Bullying	23	96	63	123	8	62.6	148.77*	0.689
Discrimination	50	127	51	77	6	62.2	126.22*	0.637

Note: The degrees of freedom for all tests equal 4.

SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; N = neutral; A = agree; SA = strongly agree;

E = expected value; W = Cohen's W.

* $p < .000$

Summary

Chapter 4 included the descriptive statistics results for this study's participants.

Hypothesis testing was also included for the 13 hypotheses corresponding to the study's three research questions. Due to the mixed results of the one-sample t tests used to test

the 13 hypotheses, additional analyses were conducted, and results were shared using a chi-square test for goodness of fit. In Chapter 5, a comprehensive summary of the study, the findings related to the literature, and the conclusions are presented.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

This quantitative study was conducted to understand the extent to which secondary principals in Kansas and Missouri agree that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are implemented in their schools. Additionally, the study was conducted to understand the extent to which they agree that bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occur in their schools. Included in Chapter 5 is a summary of the study, findings related to the literature, and the conclusions.

Study Summary

This section includes an overview of the problem and the purpose statement and research questions. Additionally, this section contains a review of the methodology. Finally, the major findings of this study are also included.

Overview of the Problem

According to Greytak et al. (2016), students who identify as LGBTQ+ are more vulnerable and more likely to feel unsafe at school. LGBTQ+ students are also more likely to be harassed and assaulted compared to their non-LGBTQ+ peers (Greytak et al., 2016). In the most recent 2021 GLSEN NSCS (Kosciw et al., 2022), most students identifying as LGBTQ+ (81.8%) responded that they feel “unsafe in school because of at least one of their actual or perceived personal characteristics” (p. xv). Similarly, the 2021 GLSEN NSCS findings exhibited that Kansas and Missouri schools “were not safe for most LGBTQ+ secondary school students” (GLSEN, 2023a, 2023b, p. 1).

It is important to note that although research exists on school safety issues for LGBTQ+ students and their perceptions on the implementation of research-based

practices for supporting them in schools, there is a lack of research on school principals' perceptions as to whether they have implemented comprehensive research-based practices that create supportive and inclusive school climates. Therefore, Boyland et al. (2018) attempted to explore this phenomenon by studying how Indiana middle school principals implement research-based practices for best supporting LGBTQ+ students. Since their study focused on one level and one state, it was vital to investigate whether secondary principals, including in high schools, implement supportive research-based practices that create school climates that include LGBTQ students. It was also imperative that research was conducted to determine if secondary principals perceive bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ occurs in their schools.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The first purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which policies and research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are being implemented in Kansas and Missouri secondary schools. The second purpose of this study was to determine whether Kansas and Missouri secondary principals report that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. The final purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Kansas and Missouri secondary principals report that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs at their schools. To address the purposes of this study, three research questions were posed and 13 hypotheses were tested to address the RQs.

Review of the Methodology

A quantitative design utilizing survey research methods was used to gather the perceptions of secondary principals in Kansas and Missouri on the extent to which they

agree that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are implemented in their schools and the extent they agree that bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occur at their school. This study involved the measurement of three variables of interest: the perception of Kansas and Missouri secondary principals that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are being implemented in their schools, the perception that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools, and the perception that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools. The participants for this study were secondary principals in Kansas and Missouri and were selected if their schools' included students in any Grades 7-12. Principals were eligible to be a part of the sample if they were in their current role during the 2022-2023 school year. Data were collected using a modified version of Boyland et al.'s (2018) Principal Survey Regarding Policies and Practices Supporting LGBTQ Students. With permission from Boyland, the survey was adapted to meet the needs of this study. As described in Chapter 3, appropriate modifications were made. The researcher used an expert panel of former secondary principals to guarantee the survey's content validity. Panel participants provided feedback and suggestions on how to ensure item clarity and if any additional survey items were needed to meet the needs of the study. Once data were collected, 13 one-sample *t* tests were conducted to test H1-H13. Due to the one-sample *t* tests yielding mixed results, multiple chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to understand the mixed results better. The distribution of the responses on the agreement scale for each of the 13 items was examined in the additional analyses.

Major Findings

The results of the H1-H11 analyses related to Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are implemented in their schools were mostly supported. Kansas and Missouri secondary principals indicated they agree that the following researched-based practices were implemented at their schools:

- Comprehensive anti-bullying policies that enumerate (specifically name) sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are implemented and enforced at their schools.
- Principals provide a system that allows students to anonymously report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents.
- Principals provide ongoing communication of anti-bullying expectations to the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians).
- Principals ensure that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ+ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances).
- Principals model how staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.
- Staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.
- The establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances or similar student clubs at their schools is supported.
- LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place.

- Procedures are established for the logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms).
- Staff are provided training on preventing LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination at their schools.

Although Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that most of the research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students were implemented in their schools, they disagree that an inclusive curriculum positively representing minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events is implemented. The results of the hypothesis testing for H12 related to Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools was not supported. Similarly, the hypothesis testing results for H13 related to Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools was not supported.

Due to the mixed hypothesis testing results, the distribution of the responses on the agreement scale for each of the 13 items was examined, and a chi-square test for goodness of fit was conducted. The results of the chi-square tests for these additional analyses were also mixed. The results indicated that Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree or strongly agree that the following research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are in place at their schools:

- Comprehensive anti-bullying policies that enumerate (specifically name) sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are implemented and enforced at their schools.

- Principals provide a system that allows students to anonymously report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents.
- Principals provide ongoing communication of anti-bullying expectations to the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians).
- Principals ensure that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ+ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances).
- Principals model how staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.
- Staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.
- LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place.
- Procedures are established for the logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms).

Interestingly, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree, are neutral, or agree that the following research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are in place at their schools:

- The establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances or similar student clubs at their schools is supported.
- An inclusive curriculum positively representing minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events is implemented.

Finally, for the last two items, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree and agree that bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occur in their schools.

Findings Related to the Literature

The focus of this section is on findings related to the literature. Chapter 2 identified similar studies completed by previous researchers. In this section, the findings from this current study are compared and contrasted to those from previous research.

Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that comprehensive anti-bullying policies that enumerate (specifically name) sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are implemented and enforced at their schools. This finding supports GLSEN and Harris Interactive's (2008) findings that most secondary principals reported having anti-bullying policies that specifically included sexual orientation, while 44% of principals reported having an anti-bullying policy that named gender identity or expression. The current research also supports Boyland et al.'s (2018) outcomes of 60.2% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that their anti-bullying policies specifically named LGBTQ+ students. The results of the 2018 and 2020 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019, 2022) indicate that most national, Kansas, and Missouri secondary principals agree that they implement school practices prohibiting harassment of LGBTQ+ students, which the findings from the current research also support. In contrast, the perceptions of Kansas and Missouri secondary principals in this current study do not align with the outcomes from previous studies that included perceptions from LGBTQ+ students regarding the implementation of comprehensive anti-bullying policies that specifically name LGBTQ+ students (GLSEN, 2021a, 2021b, 2023a, 2023b; Kosciw et al., 2020, 2022).

The results from the current study suggest that Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that their schools provide a system that allows students to anonymously

report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents. This finding supports GLSEN and Harris Interactive's (2008) study result that 84% of all secondary principals said they have procedures for reporting bullying and harassment included in their policies. The current research also supports Boyland et al.'s (2018) results that Indiana middle school principals agree they had established anonymous systems for reporting bullying and discrimination. The findings from this current research also support those of the 2018 and 2020 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019, 2022), where the majority of national, Kansas, and Missouri principals reported having a designated staff member to whom students could come to report bullying and sexual harassment confidentially. However, the findings do not align with Kosciw et al.'s (2020, 2022) results that LGBTQ+ students hesitated to report or did not report bullying because they doubted if school staff would do anything about it or if the intervention would be ineffective.

According to the results of this current study, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they provide ongoing communication of anti-bullying expectations to the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians). This finding supports the results from GLSEN & Harris Interactive (2008), where 55% of secondary principals implemented anti-bullying awareness campaigns. Boyland et al.'s (2018) findings on communicating anti-bullying expectations to the school community are also supported by the results of the current study. National, Kansas, and Missouri results regarding respondents' reports of communicating bullying and sexual harassment policies and information about preventing bullying and sexual harassment from the 2018-2020 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2019, 2022) are also supported by this current finding.

Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they ensure that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ+ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances). The finding from this current study supports the findings from GLSEN and Harris Interactive's (2008) study, where 67.0% of secondary principals said they believe that specific protections for LGBTQ+ students in anti-discrimination policies are extremely or very helpful. The finding also supports the findings from Boyland et al.'s (2018) study, where Indiana middle school principals agreed that they ensured non-discriminatory school policies and practices were in place for LGBTQ+ students in their schools. However, this finding is in contrast with Kosciw et al.'s (2020, 2022) studies, where over half of the LGBTQ+ students reported experiencing discriminatory policies and practices in their schools. Similarly, the finding from this current study does not align with the 2019 and 2021 Kansas and Missouri State Snapshots (GLSEN, 2021a, 2021b, 2023a, 2023b) survey results where the majority of Kansas and Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported experiencing LGBTQ-related discriminatory policies or practices in their schools.

In this current study, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, they model how the staff is expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students. Kansas and Missouri also agree that at their school, staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students. These findings align with what GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) found in their study, where 69.0% of secondary principals reported that having clear consequences for school staff who do not intervene would help ensure a safer school environment for LGBTQ+ students. This finding also supports Boyland et al.'s (2018) results of Indiana middle school principals agreeing that they

model how they and their staff intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students. The finding from the current study, however, does not align with Kosciw et al.'s (2020, 2022) findings of most LGBTQ+ students reporting that staff never intervened when hearing homophobic remarks.

In this current study, mixed results were found related to the findings of Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' agreement that the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances or similar student clubs at their schools is supported. Based on the additional analyses, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree, are neutral, or agree that GSAs or similar clubs are supported in their schools. The agreement results of this finding support Kosciw et al.'s (2020) results, where most LGBTQ+ students reported having a GSA or similar club available in their schools. The agreement results from this current study also support the results from the 2019 Kansas and Missouri State Snapshots (GLSEN, 2021a, 2021b), where over 60.0% of Kansas and Missouri LGBTQ+ students reported having access to a GSA or similar club available at their schools. The disagreement findings of this study also align with GLSEN and Harris Interactive's (2008) results of 34% of secondary principals reporting that they had GSAs or similar clubs. Additionally, the disagreement results of this finding also align with the results from the CDC's (2019) School Health Profile, where nationally and in Kansas and Missouri, less than half of the secondary principals reported that GSAs or similar clubs were established in their schools.

Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place. This finding supports GLSEN and Harris Interactive's (2008) results of

secondary principals agreeing that having principals who address the safety issues of LGBTQ+ students and support staff to put the proper measures in place to act on safety issues is extremely or very helpful. Boyland et al.'s (2018) finding of Indiana middle school principals' agreeing that supporting measures, information, and staff are in place for LGBTQ+ students is also supported by this current study. The current finding that LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place also supports the CDC's 2018 and 2020 School Health Profiles (2020, 2022) national outcomes that most schools facilitated access to providers off school grounds to provide health support for LGBTQ+ students and access to outside social and psychological supports for LGBTQ+ students.

According to the 2018 and 2020 School Health Profiles (CDC, 2020, 2022), nationally, secondary school principals and lead health teachers agree that they have identified safe spaces in their schools for LGBTQ+ students. The findings from those studies are supported by the current finding that Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support and can identify staff who are supportive of LGBTQ+ students in their schools. However, this current study's finding is in contrast with the national, Kansas, and Missouri 2019 and 2021 NSCS results, where LGBTQ+ students reported low levels of support from school administrators (GLSEN, 2021a, 2021b, 2023a, 2023b; Kosciw et al., 2022).

According to the one-sample *t*-test results of this study, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree that at their schools, an inclusive curriculum is implemented (a curriculum that positively represents minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events). However, after additional analyses

were conducted, mixed results for this finding indicate that Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree, are neutral, or agree that the research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are in place at their schools. The disagreement results of this finding support multiple studies, where participants indicated that they disagree with implementing or having access to an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum (Boyland et al., 2018; CDC, 2022; GLSEN, 2021a, 2021b, 2023a, 2023b; Kosciw et al., 2020, 2022). The agreement results from this current study align with the GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2008) participants' who agree that implementing an inclusive curriculum that incorporates LGBTQ+ people, history, and events is extremely helpful in creating a safe school environment for LGBTQ+ students.

In this current study, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that at their schools, procedures are established for the logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms). This finding supports Boyland et al.'s (2018) finding that Indiana middle school principals agreed that they implement procedures for handling and supervising susceptible areas. In contrast, this study's finding does not support Kosciw et al.'s (2020) outcomes, which indicate that most LGBTQ+ students feel uncomfortable or unsafe in bathrooms, locker rooms, gyms, and athletic fields at their schools. The current finding also contrasts with Kosciw et al.'s (2022) results of 78.8% of LGBTQ+ students reporting not participating in school events or extracurricular activities due to feeling unsafe or uncomfortable about being LGBTQ+.

Kansas and Missouri secondary principals agree that school staff is provided training on preventing LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination at their schools. The current study's finding contrasts with GLSEN and Harris Interactive's (2008) study,

where only 6.0% of secondary principals shared that training on LGBTQ+ issues is provided. Also, in GLSEN and Harris Interactive's (2008) study, less than half of the principals shared that professional development on bullying included sexual orientation or students' gender identity/expression, which is not supported by this current study's findings. Boyland et al. (2018) found that Indiana middle school principals disagreed that school personnel received training on preventing harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students in their schools, which is not supported by this study's findings. Additionally, national, Kansas, and Missouri results from the 2020 School Health Profile (CDC, 2022) indicate that less than one-third of secondary principals and lead health teachers reported that their staff had received professional development to support LGBTQ+ students.

According to this study's one-sample *t*-test results, Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree that bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools. However, after additional analyses, mixed results for this finding indicate that Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagree and agree that bullying LGBTQ+ students occur in their schools. The agreement results of this finding support multiple studies where participants indicated that bullying and harassment of LGBTQ+ students occur in their schools (Boyland et al., 2018; GLSEN, 2021a, 2021b; GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008; Greytak et al., 2016; Kosciw et al., 2022). However, the disagreement results for this current study align with GLSEN and Harris Interactive's (2008) outcome, where only 10% of middle school principals and 10% of senior high school principals shared that students were bullied based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation. The disagreement finding also aligns with one of Boyland et al.'s (2018) findings, where less

than half of Indiana middle school principals agreed or strongly agreed that bullying or discrimination of transgender students occurs at their schools.

The results from the one-sample *t* tests conducted for the current research indicate that Kansas and Missouri secondary principals disagreed that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools. However, after additional analyses, mixed results for this finding indicate that Kansas and Missouri secondary principals both disagree and agree that discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs in their schools. The agreement results of this finding supported the results from the 2019 and 2021 Kansas and Missouri State Snapshots (GLSEN, 2021a, 2021b, 2023a, 2023b), indicating that over half of the Kansas and Missouri LGBTQ+ student participants reported experiencing LGBTQ+-related discriminatory policies or practices in their schools. Boyland et al.'s (2018) finding that 51.9% of Indiana middle school principals agree or strongly agree that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students are bullied or discriminated against is also supported by this current study's agreement findings. Boyland et al.'s (2018) finding that less than half of Indiana middle school principals agreed or strongly agreed that bullying or discrimination of transgender students occurs in their schools supports the disagreement results of this current study's findings.

Conclusions

The findings from this study provide insight for secondary principals involved with implementing research-based practices for protecting LGBTQ+ students from bullying and discrimination. This study provides insight into how Kansas and Missouri secondary principals perceive their current implementation of research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students and if they perceive bullying and discrimination of

LGBTQ+ students occurring in their schools. The final section of this chapter includes the implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Implications for Action

Findings from this study provide evidence that focuses on several actions that could be taken to address the implementation of research-based practices for protecting LGBTQ+ students. The findings also suggest that focus could be placed on addressing the bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students. In this section, the results of this study are used to provide implications for action by state education agencies, college and university principal preparation programs, school district leaders, and principals for addressing support and protections for LGBTQ+ students.

State educational agencies play a crucial role in guaranteeing that all students, including LGBTQ+ students, in their states are provided with a high-quality, rigorous education in a safe and conducive learning environment. Therefore, the results of this study could assist state education leaders in understanding if principals in their states perceive that bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occur in their schools. This perception data could help state educational agencies identify ways to support school districts in implementing the 10 research-based practices for supporting and protecting LGBTQ+ students investigated in this study. Specifically, state educational agencies could review state educational policies related to bullying and discrimination to ensure they are comprehensive and include sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. By reviewing and making necessary adjustments to state-level bullying and discrimination guidance, states could provide district leaders with ways to

implement similar processes in their districts. Agencies could also provide districts with specific guidance on communicating such comprehensive policies to school district stakeholders. Findings from this study also support the recommendation for state educational agencies to train district administrators, principals, and teachers on how to implement inclusive curricula, including positive representations of LGBTQ+ people and historical events. Finally, state educational agencies could work with LGBTQ+ advocacy groups (GLSEN, PFLAG, or the Human Rights Campaign) to provide guidance on how to best support school districts with implementing clubs or school groups, such as GSAs, for LGBTQ+ students.

Ensuring school principals are prepared to address the needs of LGBTQ+ students is crucial for guaranteeing that LGBTQ+ students feel supported in schools. Therefore, it is recommended that schools of education review and analyze their principal preparation programs to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion of minority groups, specifically LGBTQ+ students, are included in their course pathways. Principal preparation programs that include courses related to school policies should incorporate content related to comprehensive anti-bullying policies that include sexual orientation and gender expression/identity. Additionally, principal preparation programs should include curriculum courses highlighting the importance of an inclusive curriculum incorporating positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, events, and language. It is also recommended that principal preparation programs have school safety and security courses that include ways to ensure safety measures are implemented for LGBTQ+ students, especially very vulnerable populations such as transgender students.

School district leaders are crucial to ensuring all students in their school districts, including LGBTQ+ students, are educated at high levels in safe and supportive schools. Results from this study indicate that school district leaders should administer perception surveys to principals, teachers, staff, students, and families to determine if they believe bullying and discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occur in their schools, that schools are safe for LGBTQ+ students, and that supportive practices are in place to support LGBTQ+ students. The result of this survey could provide district leaders with a wealth of data to support action steps on how to best educate and support LGBTQ+ students in their district. The results of this study also indicate that school district leaders, in collaboration with local boards of education, could review and analyze current district anti-bullying and discrimination board policies to ensure they are comprehensive and inclusive of LGBTQ+ students by adjusting them to name sexual orientation and gender identity/expression specifically. Boards of education and district leaders may find it helpful to review other school districts with comprehensive anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies that enumerate LGBTQ+ students, such as New York City Public Schools and Chicago Public Schools. Based on the results of this study, it is also strongly recommended that district leaders determine the best way to communicate anti-bullying and discrimination policies to all district stakeholders. Communication is vital to understanding the policies and consequences of violating board policies. Finally, district curriculum and instruction leaders could audit their current curriculum resources and instructional practices to ensure they include LGBTQ+ students.

According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 2021), it is the sole responsibility of the principal “to create and sustain a school

environment in which each student and educator is known, accepted, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community” (NASSP, Guiding Principal section). Therefore, the results of this study indicate that secondary principals should survey their staff and students to determine if they believe all students, with specific attention to marginalized students, including LGBTQ+ students, feel safe and supported in their schools. Using this data, principals could determine action steps to ensure LGBTQ+ students feel supported. Findings from this study also indicate that secondary principals should communicate about and enforce their schools’ comprehensive anti-bullying policies. Based on this study’s findings, it is also strongly recommended that principals provide training and professional development on how to support LGBTQ+ students best. One training opportunity should include the principal modeling for their staff on intervening when LGBTQ+ students are discriminated against or bullied. Secondary principals should also provide professional development on incorporating inclusive curriculum and instructional practices. Inclusive curriculum and instructional practice training should include incorporating students’ pronoun preferences when calling on students and incorporating positive representations of LGBTQ+ events and people in the curriculum. Finally, secondary principals should develop ways to ensure the establishment of GSAs and other supportive clubs happens in their schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

This researcher aimed to determine the extent to which policies and research-based practices for supporting LGBTQ+ students are being implemented in Kansas and Missouri secondary schools. Additionally, the researcher sought to determine whether Kansas and Missouri secondary principals report that bullying and discrimination of

LGBTQ+ students occurred at their schools. Recommendations for future research are explored in this section.

A quantitative design utilizing survey research methods was used for the current study. A recommendation for future research would be to use a mixed methods approach. This approach would allow future researchers to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Additionally, qualitative data collected through interviews with secondary principals could assist future researchers with further understanding why survey participants answered questions the way they did.

In this study, the researcher used a survey consisting only of close-ended questions with a Likert-type scale. Therefore, a recommendation for future research is to include open-ended questions at the end of each survey section. Including an open-ended question regarding secondary principals' perceptions of implementing research-based practices and perceptions of bullying and discrimination occurring at their schools allows participants to explain further why they responded the way they did to specific survey items. This addition provides possible qualitative data to further understand participants' responses to the close-ended questions.

As stated in previous chapters, there is a lack of research on how secondary principals implement comprehensive research-based practices to support and protect LGBTQ+ students. Therefore, it would benefit future researchers to conduct a similar study using this researcher's survey in more states beyond Kansas and Missouri. Including more states in this study would provide an opportunity to contribute to the existing body of research.

Another recommendation for future research would be to conduct analyses related to the correlations of descriptive statistics findings with the hypothesis findings related to the three research questions. These further analyses would allow future researchers to understand if the demographics of secondary principals, including the state in which they work, total years as a secondary principal, current position, gender, and the school community area in which they work (rural, town, suburban, or city), impact how they responded to specific survey items. Additionally, future researchers may identify further demographic information that would be beneficial to include in this analysis.

Concluding Remarks

The role of the secondary principal is crucial for the success of every middle and high school student. The NASSP (2021) stated that secondary principals “must take intentional action to promote education and advocacy that furthers positive social-emotional and academic development for each student and proactively works to eliminate bias, discrimination, and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression” (NASSP Guiding Principles section, para. 7). With the lack of research regarding secondary principals’ perceptions of implementing research-based practices that support and protect LGBTQ+ students from bullying and discrimination, this study provides additional research on this limited topic. As the results of this study indicate, there is still work that secondary principals should do to implement research-based practices. Specifically, secondary principals should continue to develop their understanding as well as the understanding of their staff regarding implementing an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum through professional development. Additionally, secondary principals should continue to support the development of GSAs and other

supportive clubs for LGBTQ+ students. Incorporating these high-leverage research-based practices can ensure LGBTQ+ students have a safe place to advocate for themselves and other LGBTQ+ students. Additionally, implementing these practices can ensure that staff have the tools and knowledge to support LGBTQ+ students to feel welcome and safe in their schools to learn, which is the ultimate goal of our schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Permission to Use Survey

Re: LGBTQ research surveys usage request**From:** Boyland, Lori G. <lgbayland@bsu.edu>**Sent:** Saturday, June 18, 2022 5:06 PM**To:** Matthew J Andersen <MatthewJAndersen@stu.bakeru.edu>**Subject:** Re: LGBTQ research surveys usage request

Hi Matthew,

Certainly, happy to help! I'm attaching the survey questions and also the list of best practices that we identified per the research (that align with the survey).

Good luck on your study!

Lori Boyland

Dr. Lori Boyland, Professor Emeritus of Educational Leadership

Department of Educational Leadership, Teachers College
Ball State University

*Ranked 7th in the nation for online Master's degrees in Educational Administration
by US News & World Report in 2022

From: Matthew J Andersen <MatthewJAndersen@stu.bakeru.edu>
Sent: Friday, June 17, 2022 12:47 PM**To:** Boyland, Lori G. <lgbayland@bsu.edu>**Cc:** matthew.andersen3@gmail.com <matthew.andersen3@gmail.com>; Matthew J Andersen <matthew.andersen@kckps.org>**Subject:** LGBTQ research surveys usage request

Dear Dr. Lori Boyland,

My name is Matthew Andersen, and I am a doctoral candidate at Baker University in Kansas. I am currently reviewing dissertations and journal articles to determine my dissertation topic. My study will focus on the inclusivity of LGBTQ students through the lens of school leadership, policies, and practices in Kansas and possibly other central Midwest states (i.e., Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa). As I have been reviewing, I came across two of your journal articles:

- Policies and Practices Supporting LGBTQ Students in Indiana's Middle Schools (NASSP, 2018)
- Actions and Attitudes Regarding Middle-Grade LGBTQ Students: Principals' Perspectives (Journal of School Leadership, 2019)

I am interested in possibly using and adjusting your surveys as part of my study. Would you be willing to share your surveys with me and allow me to use and adapt it to meet the needs of my research? After completing my dissertation, I would be happy to share my results and findings with you.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I'd appreciate a written response to my request, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Have a wonderful weekend.

Matt

Matthew Andersen, Ed.D. Candidate
Baker University
matthewjandersen@stu.bakeru.edu
OR
matthew.andersen3@gmail.com

**Appendix B: Principal Survey Regarding Policies and Practices Supporting LGBTQ
Students (Boyland et al., 2018)**

Principal Survey

Regarding Policies and Practices Supporting LGBTQ Students

*A PDF link at the end of the survey will take you to a complete list of ten best practices to print or save.

SECTION 1 - Your demographics

Please indicate the following:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Your current position
4. Total years in current position
5. Total years as principal
6. Race/Ethnicity
7. Total student enrollment in your school
8. Approx. percent of students on free/reduced meals in your school
9. Estimated number of gay and lesbian students enrolled in your school (your best guess)
10. Estimated number of transgender and gender nonconforming students enrolled in your school (your best guess)
11. Community population
 - ☐ 10,000 or less ☐ 10,001 – 25,000 ☐ Over 25,000
12. School Community Area
 - ☐ Rural ☐ Urban ☐ Suburban

SECTION 2 – Your experience and feedback regarding policies and practices.

Please use the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree NA = Not applicable

Practice 1 - School anti-bullying policies

1. My school has anti-bullying policies.
2. I believe anti-bullying policies can help reducing bullying towards LGBTQ students.
3. My school's anti-bullying policies enumerate sexual orientation and gender identify/expression.
4. My school's anti-bullying policies are consistently enforced by school personnel.
5. My school's anti-bullying policies are effective in reducing bullying towards gay, lesbian, and bisexual students at my school.
6. My school's anti-bullying policies are effective in reducing bullying towards transgender and gender nonconforming students at my school.
7. I support policies that protect gay, lesbian, and bisexual students.
8. I support policies that protect transgender and gender nonconforming students.
9. Bullying of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students occurs at my school.
10. Bullying of transgender and gender nonconforming students occurs at my school.

Practice 2 – A system of anonymous reporting

11. Providing a system of anonymous reporting is effective in reducing bullying or discrimination against LGBTQ students.
12. My school has implemented a system that allows for anonymous reporting of bullying, discrimination, or other incidents.
13. My school's system of anonymous reporting is effective in reducing bullying or discrimination against LGBTQ students at my school.

Practice 3 - Communication of anti-bullying policies to school community

14. Regular communications about the school's anti-bullying expectations with the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians) helps reduce bullying.
15. At my school, we regularly communicate anti-bullying expectations to the school community.
16. Providing regular communications about the school's anti-bullying expectations to the school community helps reduce bullying at my school.

Practice 4 - Non-discriminatory school policies and practices

17. Establishing school policies and practices that do not discriminate against LGBTQ individuals helps support LGBTQ students.
18. My school's policies and practices do not discriminate against gay, lesbian, and bisexual students (e.g. dress codes, school dances).
19. My school's policies and practices do not discriminate against transgender and gender nonconforming students (e.g. dress codes, school dances).
20. Having school policies and practices that do not discriminate against LGBTQ students helps support these students at my school.
21. Discrimination by school staff against gay, lesbian and bisexual students occurs at my school.
22. Discrimination by school staff against transgender and gender nonconforming students occurs at my school.

Practice 5 – An expectation of intervention

23. School personnel should be expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ students when they become aware of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
24. At my school, personnel are expected to intervene in support of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students when they become aware of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
25. At my school, personnel are expected to intervene in support of transgender and gender nonconforming students when they become aware of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
26. I intervene in support of LGBTQ students when I become aware of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
27. School personnel intervention in support of LGBTQ students is effective in supporting LGBTQ students at my school.

Practice 6 - Support of LGBTQ student clubs

28. Gay-Straight Alliances or similar clubs are effective in providing support to LGBTQ students.
29. I support the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances or similar student clubs at my school.
30. My school has a Gay-Straight Alliance or similar student clubs.
31. Gay-Straight Alliances or similar clubs are effective in providing support to LGBTQ students at my school.

Practice 7 – Availability of supportive staff and services

32. LGBTQ students need to know where to go at school for information and support, and supportive staff and services should be in place.
33. At my school, we make sure that LGBTQ students know where to go for information and support, and that supportive staff and services are in place.
34. Ensuring that LGBTQ students know where to go for information and support, and that supportive staff and services are in place, is effective in supporting LGBTQ students at my school.

Practice 8 - Inclusive curriculum

35. Inclusive curriculum (curriculum that positively represents LGBTQ individuals) is effective in supporting LGBTQ students.
36. At my school, we have implemented inclusive curriculum representing LGBTQ people.
37. Implementing inclusive curriculum is effective in supporting LGBTQ students at my school.

Practice 9 – Procedures in place for handling and supervision of susceptible areas

38. Establishing procedures for handling and supervision of susceptible areas is effective in supporting LGBTQ students (susceptible areas are those where embarrassment, harassment, or bullying may occur such as restrooms and locker rooms).
39. My school has established procedures for the logistics of handling and supervising susceptible areas in support of LGBTQ students.
40. Having established procedures for the logistics of handling and supervising susceptible areas is effective in supporting LGBTQ students at my school.
41. At my school, transgender and gender nonconforming students are instructed to use the restroom:
Of their choice _____
Of their biological gender _____
Of their current gender _____
A separate restroom (e.g. nurse's office) _____
Other _____
N/A (there are no transgender/gender nonconforming students at my school) _____

Practice 10 – Providing training for school personnel

42. Training for school personnel on preventing LGBTQ harassment, bullying and discrimination is effective in supporting LGBTQ students.
43. School personnel at my school have received training on preventing LGBTQ harassment, bullying, and discrimination.
44. Training for school personnel on preventing LGBTQ harassment, bullying, and discrimination is effective in supporting LGBTQ students at my school.

SECTION 3 - Your perception of school/community members' attitudes about LGBTQ students.

Please indicate on the temperature scale the degree, cool to warm, that you believe represents general attitudes about LGBTQ students in your school community

45. General attitude of the student body about gay, lesbian, and bisexual students
46. School personnel (teachers and support staff) attitudes about gay, lesbian, and bisexual students
47. My attitude about gay, lesbian, and bisexual students

- 48. Other administrators' attitudes about gay, lesbian, and bisexual students
- 49. Parents' attitude about gay, lesbian, and bisexual students
- 50. Community members' attitudes about gay, lesbian, and bisexual students
- 51. School Board members' attitudes about gay, lesbian, and bisexual students
- 52. Attitude of the student body about transgender and gender nonconforming students
- 53. Attitude of school personnel (teachers and support staff) about transgender and gender nonconforming students
- 54. My attitude about transgender and gender nonconforming students
- 55. Other administrators' attitudes about transgender and gender nonconforming students
- 56. Parents' attitudes about transgender and gender nonconforming students
- 57. Community members' attitudes about transgender and gender nonconforming students
- 58. School Board members' attitudes about transgender and gender nonconforming students.

SECTION 4 - Open-ended questions

Please respond to these questions.

- 59. What is working well at your school in terms of promoting acceptance of LGBTQ students?
- 60. What issues or barriers are you facing in supporting LGBTQ students?
- 61. What practices not mentioned in the survey have you found to be effective in supporting LGBTQ students?

Thank you for completing this survey - your participation is greatly appreciated!

Please click on this link to access a PDF of ten best practices for supporting LGBTQ students. **<link to PDF>**

**Appendix C: Principals' Perceptions of Bullying and Discrimination and the
Research-Based Practices for Supporting LGBTQ+ Students Survey**

Section 1 – Principal Perceptions Regarding Implementation of Research-Based Practices for Supporting LGBTQ+ Students

Please respond to your level of agreement with each item from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

1. At the school in which I work, comprehensive anti-bullying policies that specifically name sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are implemented and enforced.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
2. At the school in which I work, a system is provided that allows students to anonymously report bullying, harassment, and/or discriminatory incidents.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
3. At the school in which I work, ongoing communication is provided of anti-bullying expectations to the school community (students, school personnel, and parents/guardians).
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
4. At the school in which I work, it is ensured that current school policies and practices are not discriminatory against LGBTQ+ students (e.g., dress codes, school dances).
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
5. At the school in which I work, I model how staff should intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
6. At the school in which I work, staff are expected to intervene in support of LGBTQ+ students.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
7. At the school in which I work, the establishment of gay-straight alliances or similar student clubs are supported.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
8. At the school in which I work, LGBTQ+ students know where to go for information and support, and supportive staff and services are in place.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
9. At the school in which I work, an inclusive curriculum is implemented (curriculum that positively represents minorities, including LGBTQ people, in terms of history, language, and events).
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
10. At the school in which I work, procedures are established for logistics of handling and supervision of susceptible areas (e.g., restrooms, locker rooms).
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

11. At the school in which I work, school staff are provided training on preventing LGBTQ+ harassment and discrimination.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Section 2 – Principal Perceptions Regarding Bullying and Discrimination Towards LGBTQ+ Students

12. Bullying of LGBTQ+ students occurs at my school.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

13. Discrimination of LGBTQ+ students occurs at my school.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Section 3 – Demographics

Please indicate the following:

1. Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Non-binary ☐ Prefer not say

2. Current position:

☐ High School Principal w/ Grades 9-12
☐ High School Principal w/ Grades 10-12
☐ High School Principal w/ Grade 9 ONLY
☐ Middle School/Jr. High School Principal w/ Grades 6-8
☐ Middle School/Jr. High School w/ Grades 7-8
☐ Principal w/ Grades K-12
☐ Principal w/Grades K-8
☐ Other (if other, please describe what grades you supervise in your school)

3. State where you currently work

☐ Kansas ☐ Missouri

4. Total years as a secondary principal

☐ Please list years as numerals (e.g., 1, 2, 15, etc.)

5. School Community Area

☐ Rural- Territory not included within an urban area or urban cluster (less than 2,500 people)
☐ Town- Territory inside an urbanized cluster (2,500-49,999 people)
☐ Suburban- Territory inside an urbanized area (50,000 or more people) and outside a principal city

☐ City- Territory inside an urbanized area (50,000 or more people) and inside of a principal city

Appendix D: IRB Approval



Baker University Institutional Review Board

January 10th, 2023

Dear Matt Andersen and Susan Rogers,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.
6. If this project is not completed within a year, you must renew IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at npoell@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,

Nathan Poell, MLS
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee

Tim Buzzell, PhD
Nick Harris, MS
Scott Kimball, PhD
Susan Rogers, PhD

Appendix E: Solicitation Emails

Dear Building Principal,

You have been selected to participate in a study examining Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' perceptions of bullying and discrimination in their schools and their implementation of 10 research-based practices for supporting and protecting LGBTQ+ students from bullying and discrimination. I greatly appreciate your voluntary participation in this study; you may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty or repercussion.

The survey consists of 18 multiple-choice items. You may choose to answer some or all the questions; however, it may not be possible for me to complete the data analysis if you choose not to answer some of the questions. There are no risks associated with your participation. The survey is completely anonymous. Your privacy is essential; your responses will be combined with other participants' responses and reported in summary format. Information reported will not indicate individual participants or schools. There is no penalty should you choose not to participate or respond to all the items. Your completion and submission of the survey will indicate your consent to participate and permission to use the information you provided for my study.

There is no cost to you except your time. This survey should take at most 10 minutes to complete. Please complete the entire survey by February 13, 2023. Please click on the link below to complete the online survey.

<https://forms.gle/CMi7MACZr2keaEi38>

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant or have any questions regarding the study, please contact me at matthewjandersen@stu.bakeru.edu or (605)-760-3659, or my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers srogers@bakeru.edu or (785) 230-2801.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Andersen, M.Ed.
Baker University Doctoral Candidate

FIRST REMINDER

Dear Building Principal,

You were contacted a few weeks ago regarding participation in a study examining Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' (Grades 7-12) perceptions of bullying and discrimination in their schools and their implementation of 10 research-based practices for supporting and protecting LGBTQ+ students from bullying and discrimination. If you've already completed the survey, I thank you so much, and you may disregard this email. If you have not completed the survey, I would greatly appreciate your voluntary participation in this study; you may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty or repercussion.

The survey consists of 18 multiple-choice items. You may choose to answer some or all the questions. There are no risks associated with your participation. The survey is completely anonymous. Your privacy is essential; your responses will be combined with other participants' responses and reported in summary format. Information reported will not indicate individual participants or schools. There is no penalty should you choose not to participate or respond to all the items. Your completion and submission of the survey will indicate your consent to participate and permission to use the information you provided for my study.

There is no cost to you except your time. This survey should take at most 10 minutes to complete. Please complete the survey by February 27, 2023. Please click on the link below.

<https://forms.gle/CMi7MACZr2keaEi38>

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant or have any questions regarding the study, please contact me at matthewjandersen@stu.bakeru.edu or (605)-760-3659, or my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers srogers@bakeru.edu or (785) 230-2801.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Andersen, M.Ed.
Baker University Doctoral Candidate

SECOND REMINDER

Dear Building Principal,

You were contacted a couple of times regarding participation in a study examining Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' (Grades 7-12) perceptions of bullying and discrimination in their schools and their implementation of 10 research-based practices for supporting and protecting LGBTQ+ students from bullying and discrimination. I need more participants to complete the survey for this study. If you have not completed the survey, I would greatly appreciate your voluntary participation in this study; you may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty or repercussion.

If you've already completed the survey, I thank you so much, and you may disregard this email.

The survey consists of 18 multiple-choice items. You may choose to answer some or all the questions. There are no risks associated with your participation. The survey is completely anonymous. Your privacy is essential; your responses will be combined with other participants' responses and reported in summary format. Information reported will not indicate individual participants or schools. There is no penalty should you choose not to participate or respond to all the items. Your completion and submission of the survey will indicate your consent to participate and permission to use the information you provided for my study.

There is no cost to you except your time. This survey should take at most 10 minutes to complete. Please complete the survey **by March 20, 2023**. Please click on the link below.

<https://forms.gle/CMi7MACZr2keaEi38>

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant or have any questions regarding the study, please contact me at matthewjandersen@stu.bakeru.edu or (605)-760-3659, or my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers srogers@bakeru.edu or (785) 230-2801.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Andersen, M.Ed.
Baker University Doctoral Candidate

FINAL REMINDER

Dear Building Principal,

You were contacted several times regarding participation in a study examining Kansas and Missouri secondary principals' (Grades 7-12) perceptions of bullying and discrimination in their schools and their implementation of 10 research-based practices for supporting and protecting LGBTQ+ students from bullying and discrimination.

I greatly need more participants to complete the survey for this study. If you have not completed the survey, I sincerely appreciate your voluntary participation in this study; you may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty or repercussion.

If you've already completed the survey, I thank you so much, and you may disregard this email.

The survey consists of 18 multiple-choice items. You may choose to answer some or all the questions. There are no risks associated with your participation. The survey is completely anonymous. Your privacy is essential; your responses will be combined with other participants' responses and reported in summary format. Information reported will not indicate individual participants or schools. There is no penalty should you choose not to participate or respond to all the items. Your completion and submission of the survey will indicate your consent to participate and permission to use the information you provided for my study.

There is no cost to you except your time. This survey should take at most 10 minutes to complete. Please complete the survey **by April 1, 2023, as the survey will close on April 3, 2023**. Please click on the link below.

<https://forms.gle/CMi7MACZr2keaEi38>

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant or have any questions regarding the study, please contact me at matthewjandersen@stu.bakeru.edu or (605)-760-3659, or my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers srogers@bakeru.edu or (785) 230-2801.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Andersen, M.Ed.
Baker University Doctoral Candidate