

For more information or to discuss professional development and youth organizing activities for your school, please contact: The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, Shannon Sullivan, 312/368.9070 x12, ssullivan@mhai.org

**Chicago Public High Schools
Differential Risk Factors for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Identified Students
2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results**

The Chicago Public Schools Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CYRBS) is conducted every two years by the Chicago Public Schools Department of Specialized Services in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey monitors behaviors of high school students that are related to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among youth and adults in the United States.

The 2003 CYRBS was conducted in 23 randomly selected public high schools. In total 968 students in grades 9-12 participated in this voluntary and anonymous survey. Because of the high student and school response rates, the results of this survey can be generalized to apply to public high school students across the city of Chicago. The sample consisted of equal numbers of females (50.6%) and males (49.4%). The sample was predominantly African-American/Black (51.1%) and Latino (34.1%) with the remainder of the students identifying as White (10.1%), Asian (1.6%) and other (3%).

Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students

The CYRBS found that:

- 6.3 percent of students surveyed described themselves as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
- 8.5 percent of students surveyed described themselves as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and/or reported same-sex sexual contact.

Within the students who identified as LGB, the sample comprised of slightly more males (53.4%) than females (41.4%), with 5% of the students not identifying a gender. The sample was predominantly African-American/Black (48.3%) and Latino (32.8%) with the remainder of the students identifying as White (10.3%), Asian (1.7%) and other (6.8%).

Differential Risk Factors for LGB Youth

While students identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual did **not** differ from other student on a number of factors including failing grades, driving drunk, or carrying a weapon or gun, they were significantly more likely than their peers to report feeling unsafe at school, being in a physical fight at school, suicide attempts, and drug use. They were not more likely, however, to report early onset of alcohol or drug use suggesting that these become risk factors for LGB identified students during adolescence.

When compared to other students, this group was:

- Three times more likely to **miss school in the past month because of feeling unsafe**
- Almost two times more likely to **report being in a fight at school**
- Three times more likely to **report being the victim of sexual assault**
- Almost three times more likely to report **attempting suicide in the past year**

	LGB identified students*	Other Students**
missing school because they felt unsafe	33 %	11 %
being in a fight at school in past year	32 %	17 %
sexual assault	26 %	8 %
depression	52 %	31 %
attempted suicide	32 %	11 %

*All differences between LGB students and other students are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

**This group includes students who identified their sexual orientation as heterosexual, not sure, or did not answer the question.