A Strategy for Assessing School Culture and Gender Regimes

NC State University

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Abstract

 Based on experiences of a classroom teacher, resources are utilized to create an assessment survey, analyzing the presence of gender stereotypes and heterosexism in a school community. The survey, based on the work of Grant and Sleeter (2009), includes opportunities for broader data analysis, including a demographics and perspectives survey, a classroom-level survey, and a school-level survey. Used together or separately, these sections are designed to provoke awareness and reflection, leading to critical discourse on the presence of heteronormative expectations within American schools and the actions teachers and school leaders can take to combat them. The survey document and a glossary of selected terms are included.

**Introduction: A personal statement of interest and purpose**

 As a high school Chemistry teacher, I have often struggled to find bridges between students’ lived experiences and an incredibly dense curriculum into which most adolescents carry negative preconceived notions and inhibitions; For many students, just hearing the word “Chemistry” sends them running, activating a complex of frustration, confusion, and fear of failure. After repackaging the standard content of this course in several ways, I finally fell into some success pulling resistant students into the learning by using storytelling – metaphors based on students’ own experiences that utilized creative, humorous, and most often *goofy* plot lines. I started hearing disenchanted students re-explain the same content with which they had long struggled in terms of these stories, using them to relate and situate the Chemistry concepts in their own perspectives. I never really trusted this as an instructional strategy until I heard reports from teachers that my students encountered later in their high school careers of students bursting out into some outrageous storyline, complete with gestures and expressions and a climax fit for Hollywood, simply because something they were learning harkened back to one of these metaphors they remembered from a lesson in my class. This is when I learned the power of storytelling in teaching young minds.

 As proud as I am to gloat about the ways my students find connections between my classroom’s content and the world in which they live and learn, and as excited as I am to hear how they have retained the “Big Ideas” of my lessons, more recently I have been jolted into recognizing a troubling pattern that unnerves my confidence in metaphor-based Chemistry.

 I first encountered the term “gender regime” under the leadership of Dr. Patricia Marshall, in a graduate course discussion just scratching the surface of gender-related norms in American high schools. Based on a selection of the literature studying gender stereotypes, equity, and the issues facing our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth, the class discussed how these cultural norms have served to shape the experience of students of all backgrounds, across ethnoracial groups and throughout socioeconomic classes. As I came to understand gender as a transcending aspect of the identity of young persons, I situated this problematic duality of male and female social norms in my own lived experiences: As a gay man who encountered my “otherness” as a tenth-grade student in an American, southern, urban high school environment and having spent the greater part of my young adulthood reconciling this deeply personal segment of my identity with my faith, family and friends, and my own self image, I have struggled against social expectations of masculinity and I have negotiated relationships in which I have had to defend my own expressions of gender and sexuality.

 As my graduate coursework inspired continued personal and professional reflection, and as I became critically aware of implicit norms structured into my own teaching and the classroom environment I had created in a largely conservative, middle-class school community, I began to recognize the problematic images of male-female relationships that situated many of the instructional metaphors I had found so successful. As a gay man, and as the son of strong, single, working mother, I have always trusted that my perspectives were certainly free of gender stereotypes, that I was immune to the “regimes” that dominated our society’s acceptance of masculinity and femininity and androgyny. Wasn’t I? Could I not presume that, even as I learned to recognize and negotiate the privilege afforded me as a young, White, middle-class, Christian male in a nation historically dominated by perspectives from individuals like me, I was at least innocent of the gender inequities and heterosexism that have accompanied these same dominant perspectives? Does the marginalization I felt in my own experiences, growing up in the anti-homosexual discourse of the 1990s and the fundamentalism of the conservative Christian church, not separate me from the reinforcement of this cycle of dualistic gender expression? The “jolt” that proved my own guilt came during a lesson not long after that initial graduate course discussion of gender roles in American schooling.

 I have often used typical high school relationships to model Chemistry concepts in my classroom – an important aspect of the metaphors I have come accustomed to using in my instruction. In teaching a lesson on the nature of how elements and particles in nature interact to form more complex substances, and how all of these processes are based on patterns revealed by the Periodic Table of the elements, I fell into my normal conversations connecting these nanoscopic relationships with the relationships students shared with one another. The most common metaphor I would use compared certain elements to “guys” (adolescent males tend to be very sensitive to being referred to as “boys”) and others to “girls.” These relationships then turned into “couples” and “lonely, single people who showed up to the dance alone.” For semesters, I had never criticized the heterosexism that governed these metaphors. Even with my own experiences as an adolescent who did not fall into this dichotomy, I adopted the language and norms of the accepted hegemony of gender roles and sexual orientation. Further incriminating my practices, I would often reference these same stories throughout the course, as we returned to further develop previously explored concepts, extending the metaphors based on stereotypic roles of males and females: “Guys are fine on their own, they don’t need anybody’s help. Girls are just trying to get the guy;” “The mama’s job is the take care of the babies.” Through these instructional methods, I forced onto my students the same social biases that had devalued my own realities when I was in their same place; regardless of their individual perspectives, I was reinforcing the societal domination of acceptance and normality, dualistic gender expression, and heterosexism.

 Even after I began to notice the problematic nature of these metaphors, my concerns were caught up in the day-to-day practicality they seemed to serve. I thought to myself: This instructional strategy seemed to work *so well*! How could it be *bad* if it was so in-tune with the *needs* of the students? It was finally the voice of a student that called me to action. During one lesson, after beginning my reflection on the presence of heterosexism in my classroom, a male student (of middle-class, Filipino and mixed-race background), in response to my explanation of “guys bonding with girls,” called out to me and his classmates, “What about guys bonding with other guys? What’s wrong with that?” The same thought *had* crossed my mind before this happened in my classroom, and I had wondered whether or not students would notice the implications of the metaphor. In this case, the skepticism I held of my students’ awareness of heterosexism – the same skepticism that had been holding me back from action – was thrown in my face: the young people in my classes were at least sensitive enough to diversity of sexual orientation to recognize that a dualistic image of relationships was insufficient. What became the most important reality of this moment for me however was not *what* was said, but *who* said it and *how* it was said. The young man who called out this inequity in my metaphor did not present it facetiously, as a joke or as a “tongue-in-cheek” jab at those different than himself; he mentioned it with a genuine, honest tone and a quite serious expression. I would like to think that he called it to my attention because he felt it was out of character for our classroom, but I was impressed (and surprised, to be honest) at the seriousness with which he responded. Possibly more impressive (and again surprising) was the incongruence I perceived between this particular student’s social standing and the sensitivities he was proclaiming. This student seems to represent every aspect of a stereotypic adolescent male; he is in many ways the epitome of the “high school jock” and possibly the *last* student I would predict would challenge me in this way. In fact, my own preconceived notions of this young man might judge him as very likely to be the offender in situations that reinforce heterosexism. This young man, in his willingness to speak out in a way that very well may have jeopardized his own social interactions, forced me to admit and respond to a reality of inequity that had become pervasive in my classroom: My classroom – a tool I had used to shape and build learning, and a space in which I had tirelessly worked to create a physical and emotional environment of democracy and equity, of communication, cooperation, and collaboration, and of attention to individual value of each student’s strengths and experiences – had become yet another cog in the mechanism of hegemony.

 This moment, where I was openly challenged on an issue of equity with which I feel most aligned, and where the challenge seemed to come from the least likely source, was the catalyst for a new effort to not only reduce prejudice that might be implicitly and explicitly present in my own classroom, but to seek out sources of this same inequity in the broader context of my school community.

**Methodology, process, and resources**

 After encountering Grant and Sleeter’s assessment of Multicultural Education published as an “Action Research Activity” in their 2009 text, *Turning on Learning*, I became more aware of the opportunities teachers and other school personnel have to critically assess their own school working and learning environments, in terms of equity and access to resources, as well as recognizing and meeting the needs of specific groups of individuals that take part in the school community. While the originally published survey included lines that took some of these into account, it would be difficult to use this tool to intensively study any single aspect of Multicultural Education and pedagogical equity in action. Inspired by the reflection and awareness resulting from my initial use Grant and Sleeter’s survey, I desired to use a similar tool to study the presence of gender norms in my own instruction, my classroom environment, and across my broader school community. I would move forward using this original resource as a model and framework.

 The intention of this process is to create a survey that can be used by teachers, administrators, or other school personnel to assess the presence and pervasiveness of gender regimes in a school community’s operations and programs, including school-wide events, materials and resources, policies, organizational structures, guiding philosophy, and instructional strategies. To this purpose, the survey could be used in one of two ways. First, individual teachers could use the survey to examine their own personal perspectives and experiences with gender, and how these were reflected in their classroom teaching. Teachers could apply the survey to their own practices, followed by targeted reflection and study based on the results. This is very much in line with the originally published survey and its stated purpose, choosing to include or exclude the “School-level survey” by choice if the individual was so inclined. Second, groups of teachers, administrative teams, school improvement teams, district leaders, curriculum developers, or entire school communities could engage in much broader discussion of the experiences and perspectives of individuals, the instructional practices within classrooms, and the structures across the school’s programs and policies that are influenced by and have an impact on the gender roles of students. As has occurred with my initial use of the originally published survey, the act of introducing and conducting the survey itself, without any connection to further discussions, study, or professional development opportunities, could alone inspire reflection and action on the part of individuals. (As Heisenberg tells us, the very act of studying a phenomenon often changes the phenomenon itself.) With further framework and support, the same implementation could be extended to include school-wide conversations, committee efforts, and training events that would educate individuals and encourage them to reflect on the results and meaning of their survey work. Compiling school-wide results could serve as a long-term resource for leadership study, especially when the issue of gender equity is taken up as a core value for a specific community or district. The vision for the development and use of this new tool is unlimited and intended to serve as an impetus for awareness, reflection, discussion, and meaningful action within the profession and school communities.

 To better serve this purpose, and to access the available resources, I sought out two key resources. Dr. Patricia Marshall of North Carolina State University, the professor for the graduate course previously mentioned, was first consulted for strategies in adapting the work of Grant and Sleeter for this narrowed focus. Her input has shaped several specific items in the survey, and is largely responsible for the inclusion of the first section (“Demographics survey”); she had also suggested language that has been utilized in several of items in the other sections as well. Ms. Justine Hollingshead, director of the North Carolina State University Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Center, was also consulted. Two supporting members of the Center’s staff, Dr. Bekah Jaeger and Ms. Leslie Forrest, were involved in discussions relating to the use of inclusive language and appropriate (and often thought-provoking) strategies for examining an individual’s dispositions toward the LGBTQQA community. The Women’s Center on the same university campus was also sought out for consultation, but scheduling conflicts prevented the involvement of its staff in the development of this project. In additional to these North Carolina State University campus resources, as stated previously, the originally published survey, created by Grant and Sleeter (2009) was heavily utilized, even to the extent that individual items and framing language have been borrowed from their work.

**The role of language**

 As indicated by several of the consulting resources mentioned above, the language and terminology used in a survey of this nature and this focus is crucial to its appropriate implementation and its use as a thought-provoking tool for reflection. Great care has been taken to utilize specific language in the survey’s items, often with targeted intentions; some terms and structures have been used to inform as well as to expose the reader to the critical role language plays in the reinforcement of societal gender norms, while still other terms have been used to ensure the inclusivity of the survey itself for both reliability and equity. A selected glossary is included after the survey for the use of the reader in its completion, and the resulting discussion and reflection. (This same glossary should be used for the analysis and clarification of this working document.)

**An assessment of school culture and gender regimes**

(Adapted from Grant and Sleeter 2009, pp. 190-192)

This survey is designed for teachers, administrators, or other stakeholders interested in assessing their own school community. The survey can also be used by observers, such as student teachers or district leaders, substituting a specific teacher’s name for reference to “you” and “your classroom” where appropriate. Section I gathers demographic data for the respondent, as Sections II and III include items regarding classroom and school practices.

Answer each of the survey questions according to your understanding of your school community. A glossary of selected terms is included at the end of the survey for clarification.

**Section I: Demographics survey**

The purpose of Section I is to gather information about your own personal demographics, experiences, and awareness.

Personal data:

1. Which of the following best describes your primary role in the school community?

🞏 Administrator 🞏 Counseling or student support

🞏 Teacher 🞏 Teaching assistant 🞏 Clerical or support staff 🞏 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

🞏 Community member 🞏 Parent, guardian, or caregiver of a current student 🞏 Current student

1. How long have you acted in this role in the school?

🞏 Less than 1 school year 🞏 1-2 school years

🞏 3-5 school years 🞏 5-10 school years

🞏 More than 10 school years

1. What is your age?

🞏 Under 18 years of age 🞏 18-26 years of age

🞏 27-36 years of age 🞏 37-46 years of age

🞏 47-56 years of age 🞏 Over 56 years of age

🞏 I prefer not to say

1. With which of the following racial and ethnic groups do you most identify?

🞏 Caucasian 🞏 African American 🞏Latino

🞏 Native American 🞏 Asian American 🞏 Multiracial

🞏 I choose not to identify 🞏 I prefer not to say 🞏 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your current biological sex?

🞏 Male 🞏 Female 🞏 Intersex 🞏 Asexual

🞏 Transitioning

🞏 I prefer not to say 🞏 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What was your biological sex, at birth?

🞏 Male 🞏 Female 🞏 Intersex 🞏 Asexual

🞏 I prefer not to say 🞏 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. By what gender do you identify?

🞏 Male 🞏 Female 🞏 Asexual 🞏 Other

🞏 Unspecified 🞏 Transitioning

🞏 Transgender 🞏 MTF 🞏FTM 🞏Gender queer

🞏 I choose not to identify

🞏 I prefer not to say 🞏 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. With what sexual orientation do you identify?

🞏 Straight 🞏 Gay 🞏 Lesbian

🞏 Queer 🞏 Bisexual 🞏 Questioning

🞏 Ally 🞏 Other 🞏 I prefer not to say 🞏 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How might you describe your relation to the LGBTQQA community?

🞏 I am not a member of the community

🞏 I am a member of the community

🞏 I am an ally of the community

🞏 I prefer not to say 🞏 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your current marital status?

🞏 I am single and have never been legally partnered

🞏 I am engaged to be legally partnered 🞏 I am legally married 🞏 I am in a legal civil union

🞏 I am separated but still legally partnered 🞏 I am legally divorced or legally separated

🞏 I am married or in a civil union, but my marriage or union is not legally recognized

🞏 I am monogamously partnered without formal, legal recognition

🞏 I prefer not to say

🞏 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your relationship with national and local law enforcement?

🞏 I am a currently enlisted member of the US military

🞏 I am a currently enlisted member of a US military reserve force

🞏 I am a veteran of the US military or military reserve force

🞏 My spouse or partner is a currently enlisted member of the US military or military reserve force

🞏 My spouse is a veteran of the US military or the military reserve force

🞏 At least one member of my immediate family is a current member of the US military or reserve force

🞏 At least one of my closest friends is a current member of the US military or military reserve force

🞏 At least one member of my immediate family or one of my closest friends is a veteran

🞏 At least 1 member of my extended family has served in the US military or reserve

🞏 I have never served as a member of the US military or reserve

🞏 I have considered serving as a member of the US military or reserve but have never enlisted

🞏 I have no close friends or family that have ever been enlisted as a member of the US military or reserve

1. To what extent have you participated in professional development, training, or academic courses focused on the themes of Multicultural Education, equity in American schools and society, or issues related to gender and the LGBTQQA community?

🞏 I have never participated in any training or course that explicitly dealt with these themes

🞏 I received some basic introduction to some of these themes in my teacher preparation courses

🞏 I have participated in an academic course that explicitly focused on one or more of these themes

🞏 I have participated in multiple academic courses that explicitly focused on one or more of these themes

🞏 I have participated in multiple professional development or training events that focused on these themes

🞏 I have participated in one professional development or training events that focused on these themes

🞏 I recognize these themes from my limited training but I do not feel comfortable or confident in my understanding

Perspectives and experiences:

1. How many people do you know (including your family, friends, co-workers, or acquaintances) that are of a different sexual orientation than yourself?

🞏 None 🞏 1 or 2 people 🞏 3-5 people

🞏 5-10 people 🞏 More than 10 people 🞏 More than I can count

🞏 All of them 🞏 I don’t know

For question #10, consider this scenario:

*You are inviting 10 close friends and associates to a social gathering at your home.*

*Which 10 people would you invite?*

1. How many people at your social gathering would be of a different sexual orientation than yourself?

🞏 None 🞏 1 guest 🞏 2 guests

🞏 3 or 4 quests 🞏 5 or more quests

🞏 All of them 🞏 I don’t know

1. Which of the following terms would you use to describe yourself? (Choose as many as you personally identify with; you may choose none.)

🞏 Politically-minded 🞏 Liberal 🞏 Conservative 🞏 Centrist 🞏 Democrat 🞏 Republican 🞏 Independent

🞏 Volunteer 🞏 Socially-conscious 🞏 Politcally correct 🞏 Nationalist 🞏 Visibly or overtly patriotic

🞏 Activist 🞏 Feminist

1. To what extent are you familiar with each of the following terms? Choose a value on a scale of **0 – 5**, where **0** represents being completely unaware (having never heard the term before), **1** represent being minimally aware (having heard the term before but not knowing it meaning or context), **2** represents being somewhat aware, **3** represents being aware (enough to engage in a related conversation), **4** represents being very aware (enough to engage in a direct and targeted discussion wherein you might evaluate perspectives), and **5** represents being expertly aware and about to serve as a source for others who are seeking reliable information. Write the value describing your own understanding on the blank to the left of each term.

**\_\_\_\_\_ The Stonewall riots**

**\_\_\_\_\_ “Equal pay for equal work”**

**\_\_\_\_\_ Universal child care benefit**

**\_\_\_\_\_ The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)**

**\_\_\_\_\_ Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

**\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­Proposition 8**

**\_\_\_\_\_ The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)**

**\_\_\_\_\_ “Don’t ask, don’t tell”**

1. On the blanks below, name 2 famous women and 1 famous person who was gay or a member of the LBGTQQA community.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The following chart includes a list of political and social issues in American society. For each issue listed in the first column, determine how deeply it relates to each of the American minority groups listed in the second and third columns, women and the LGBTQQA community. Choose a value on a scale of **1 – 3**, where **1** represents that the issue is of little importance or of no more importance to this minority group than to any other in the US, **2** represents that the issue is of some concern to many individuals in the community but probably not the most important issue, and **3** represent that the issue is one of the most important issues for this community in the US. Write the value describing your perspective in the blank space under each minority group’s column. Then, in the fourth column, add a ranking for your own views about each issue. (Use **X** if you prefer not to say your opinion.)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **American social and****political issues** | **How deeply does this issue relate to *women* in America?** | **How deeply does this issue relate to the *LGBTQQA community* in America?** | **How deeply does this issue relate to your own social and political views?** |
| **High quality public education** |  |  |  |
| **Marriage equality** |  |  |  |
| **Sex education** |  |  |  |
| **Social security reforms** |  |  |  |
| **Affirmative action** |  |  |  |
| **Regulation of US Banks and the finance industry** |  |  |  |
| **Illicit drug use and addiction** |  |  |  |
| **Adoption rights** |  |  |  |
| **Immigration reform** |  |  |  |
| **Early childhood education** |  |  |  |
| **Racial discrimination and inequity** |  |  |  |
| **Welfare and poverty relief** |  |  |  |
| **Equal pay legislation** |  |  |  |
| **HIV research and awareness** |  |  |  |

**Section II: Classroom-level survey**

For Section II, questions use the phrase “To what extent…?” For each question, indicate in the blank a value on a scale of **1 – 5**, where **1** represents to no extent at all, **2** represents very little, **3** represents somewhat, **4** represents to a great extent, and **5** represents to the greatest extent.

Teaching values and perspectives:

1. To what extent do you consider affirming human diversity a top priority for your teaching?
2. To what extent to you consider actively supporting (and even facilitating) the personal identity development of young people a top priority for your teaching?
3. To what extent to you feel a personal burden for providing a safe, nurturing, and equitable classroom for *all* students, regardless of background or experience?

Classroom environment and instructional planning:

1. To what extent do visuals (charts, pictures, and so on) reflect gender and sexual orientation diversity in a nonstereotypic manner?
2. To what extent do your regular instructional materials and teaching resources include people who differ by sex, gender expression, and sexual orientation in a nonstereotypic manner?
3. To what extent does your planning (including selecting materials) take into account gender stereotypes and representing nonstereotypic images of gender expression and sexual orientation?
4. To what extent do your daily lessons reflect human diversity?
5. To what extent is nonsexist and nonheterosexist language intentionally used?
6. To what extent do your tests (or other formal assessments) reflect sensitivity to gender equity and counteracting gender stereotypes?
7. Other than on special occasions, to what extent do you use resource people with various social backgrounds, those of both sexes, and those of different sexual orientations?
8. To what extent do plans for “special event” celebrations reflect diversity based on gender or sexual orientation, or feature individuals who represent nonstereotypic expressions of gender?
9. To what extent do your long-range curriculum plans promote the following multicultural concepts: appreciating the uniqueness of individuals, sensitivity to the life experiences of individuals with diverse backgrounds, awareness and critique of gender stereotypes, and the presence of diverse expressions of gender?
10. To what extent do you use different strategies to teach students with different learning styles and skill levels?
11. To what extent do your teaching strategies promote active learning and critical thinking?
12. To what extent does your instruction regularly include meaningful discussion among teacher and students as a form of active reflection?
13. To what extent do you set and maintain high expectations for *all* your students?
14. To what extent do grading practices encourage and reward success for all students equally?
15. To what extent do you try actively to communicate with parents and caregivers?

Integrating the dimensions of Multicultural Education:

1. To what extent do you purposefully integrate content into your instruction connecting the curriculum and students to gender equality, diverse expressions of gender and gender stereotypes, and issues and persons connected with the LGBTQQA community?
2. To what extent do your plans, lessons, and discussions with students promote critical reflective thinking surrounding societal constructs of masculinity, femininity, and gender roles, the influences in their own lives that shape their personal identity, and how gender regimes are reinforced by our daily interactions?
3. To what extent do you plan instruction that provides opportunities for students to challenge gender stereotypes, embrace broad and nonstereotypic expressions of gender, and reduce prejudice that negatively impacts women, individuals with diverse gender expressions, and members of the LGBTQQA community?

Leadership and reflective practice:

1. To what extent do you work to ensure that your school is a safe, accepting, affirming, and supportive environment for all individuals, regardless of background or experience, and that this local culture is visibly communicated, acted upon, and preserved?
2. To what extent do you attempt to engage your school colleagues in discussion and critical reflection surrounding gender equity, the institutional reinforcement of gender regimes, and awareness and sensitivity to the needs of young people that are members of the LGBTQQA community?
3. To what extent do you use available outlets and even work to create opportunities to critique institutional reinforcement of gender regimes and promote gender equity and awareness of diverse expressions of gender and the needs of young people that are members of the LGBTQQA community?
4. To what extent do you facilitate, lead, and participate in school-wide activities that critique gender regimes, promote gender equity and awareness of diverse expressions of gender, and support young people that are members of the LGBTQQA community?

**Section III: School-level survey**

For Section III, similarly to Section II, questions use the phrase “To what extent…?” For each question, indicate in the blank a value on a scale of **1 – 5**, where **1** represents to no extent at all, **2** represents very little, **3** represents somewhat, **4** represents to a great extent, and **5** represents to the greatest extent.

Philosophy, mission, vision, and values:

1. To what extent does the school philosophy explicitly affirm human diversity?
2. To what extent does the school philosophy explicitly address combating inequity, prejudice, and discrimination of all forms?
3. To what extent does the school philosophy explicitly address ensuring equity across genders?
4. To what extent does the school philosophy recognize and affirm the presence of diverse gender identities and expressions, including heterosexual individuals as well as members of the LGBTQQA community?

School community as a working and learning environment:

1. To what extent do visuals in the halls, common spaces, or offices (displays, pictures, bulletin boards, and so on) reflect gender and sexual orientation diversity in a nonstereotypic manner?
2. To what extent are members (students, teachers, caregivers, or local community members) of the LGBTQQA community affirmed and invited to participate openly in the school community without fear of discrimination or predjudice?
3. To what extent does the school support and encourage all students to challenge gender stereotypes and to become aware of, embrace, and affirm diverse gender identities and expressions?
4. To what extent does the school support and encourage teachers and other staff members to challenge gender stereotypes and to become aware of, embrace, and affirm diverse gender identities and expressions?
5. To what extent does the school support and encourage caregivers and local community members to challenge gender stereotypes and to become aware of, embrace, and affirm diverse gender identities and expressions?
6. To what extent are caregivers and other local community members invited to share their personal identities as a part of their involvement in the school community, even when they may be nontraditional for the local community?
7. To what extent are teachers and other staff members invited to share their personal identities as a part of their involvement in the school community, even when they may be nontraditional for the local community?
8. To what extent are students invited to share their personal identities as a part of their involvement in the school community, even when they may be nontraditional for the local community?
9. To what extent are notices sent home that intentionally use nonsexist or nonheterosexist language?
10. To what extent is there a plan to involve actively all parents and caregivers, especially those who do not identify with traditional, dualistic expressions of gender?
11. To what extent are facilities accessible for staff members, students, caregivers, and campus visitors who choose not to identify as either “male” or “female” (such as gender-neutral locker rooms or “single-use lockable spaces”)?
12. To what extent do extracurricular activities provide for the diverse interests, cultural backgrounds, and physical capabilities of all students?
13. To what extent are all students actively invited to participate and included in extracurricular activities, regardless of sex, gender or gender expression, or sexual orientation?
14. To what extent do teachers or other staff members with nontraditional gender identities and expressions or sexual orientations discuss or recognize this status openly?
15. To what extent do students with nontraditional gender identities and expressions or nontraditional sexual orientations discuss or recognize this status openly?
16. To what extent do individuals in the school community that do not hold nontraditional gender identities and expressions or nontraditional sexual orientations discuss or recognize the status of others openly, in a nonstereotypic manner?
17. To what extent do individuals in the school community that do hold nontraditional gender identities and expressions or nontraditional sexual orientations discuss or recognize their own status or that of others openly, in a nonstereotypic manner?

Administrative policies, involvement, engagement, and leadership:

1. To what extent is there a plan to ensure that curriculum and classroom materials schoolwide reflect gender equity and awareness of diverse gender expressions and identities?
2. To what extent does the plan for selecting materials and school resources include criteria acknowledging gender regimes and diverse expressions of gender?
3. To what extent do policies and practices for assigning students to instructional groups and courses facilitate equal opportunity and equal access to a strong education?
4. To what extent do policies and practices for assigning teachers and learning support personnel to instructional groups and courses facilitate equal opportunity and equal access to a strong education?
5. To what extent does the school staffing pattern provide students with diverse role models in nonstereotypic roles?
6. To what extent do discipline policies and procedures treat all students and student groups equally and equitably?
7. To what extent is there an established, communicated administrative policy for responding to intended, realized, or perceived acts of hate or discrimination within or relating to the school?
8. To what extent are school leaders ready to publically speak about their policies that embrace and affirm gender equity and diverse gender identities and expressions?
9. To what extent do plans for “special event” celebrations reflect diversity based on gender and gender expression?
10. To what extent are boys and girls offered the same education?

Resources, support, and training:

1. To what extent do library materials reflect human diversity, with special attention to equitable representations of gender and the LGBTQQA community, and nonstereotypic representations?
2. To what extent are resources, in-service and professional development opportunities, and planning time made available to help the staff work with gender-related issues?

*Thank you for completing this assessment.*

**Glossary of selected terms**

The chart below provides explanations of important terms used in the survey questions; use these for terms you are unfamiliar with or when clarification is needed:

**Figure 1: Glossary of selected terms**

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| **Term used in survey** | **Meaning within the context of survey** |
| **Human diversity** | Human diversity refers to the broad range of characteristics that make individuals and communities of human beings unique, across the earth. While the global community of humans shares diversity in the forms of race, ethnicity, culture, age, religious beliefs, familial structures, social and economic classes, and an infinitely broad range of other characteristics of our individual identities, this survey pays special attention to diversity of sex, gender, the expression of gender, and sexual orientation. |
| **Sex** | Sex refers to a person’s expressed physical status as having a penis and/or testicles (male sex organs), breasts, ovaries, a uterus, and/or a vagina (female sex organs), or some combination of these. Individuals whose anatomy contains sex organs that are not uniquely male or female often identify using terms such as intersex or transitioning; individuals whose anatomy is without sex organs sometimes identify using the term asexual. Sex is often a characteristic used to classify individuals based on externally visible physical traits that may or may not have any connection to that individual’s personal identity. |
| **Gender** | Gender is a selected characteristic that refers to the expression of male, female, combined, or excluded traits. An individual’s gender may or may not be connected to their physical anatomy, as is the case for sex. Gender is often associated with attitudes, actions, and feelings, as it is informed by a person’s identity rather than their biology. Similar terms may be used to describe an individual’s sex and gender, including male, female, transgender, or asexual, among others. |
| **Biological sex at birth** | This phrase is often used in the study of gender-sex relationships. It is used to classify individuals not by their personal identity, but by their genetically-determined biological anatomy. Often, this classification is restricted to male or female, with the understanding that rare genetic occurrences do lead to individuals that are born with multiple sex organs (both male and female; intersex) and individuals that are born without sex organs (neither male nor female; asexual). |
| **Stereotype** | Stereotype, as ubiquitous as this term may seem, requires some clarification for the purpose of this survey. The term stereotype specifically refers to any belief about an individual or a group that has been adopted and is used to judge those individuals without regard to their individual identities and experiences. Stereotypes are assumed and may or may not have any connection with a group or individual’s reality. It is also important to note that stereotypes are present in society for all groups and influence different groups in different ways. What is clear is that stereotypes do not take the uniqueness of individuals or the diversity within groups or communities that share one or more specific characteristics into account. Sometimes, we carry stereotypes with which we are uncomfortable but that are reflections of our understanding of the world in which we live. Other times, we carry stereotypes that operate so deep in our understanding of those around us that we are unaware we are projecting these broad generalizations on them. |

**Figure 1: Glossary of selected terms (continued)**

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| **Term used in survey** | **Meaning within the context of survey** |
| **Gender regime** | The term gender regime was first used by Raewyn Connell (1987) when she used it to explain the “overall pattern of gender relations within an organization.” (In this case, the “organization” will be the school community.) As Connell developed her work over the years, she explained that “gender relations are always multidimensional” and that they are based on four specific dimensions: gender division of labor, gender relations of power, emotion and human relation, and gender culture and symbolism (Connell 2002). For this survey, gender regimes refer to more than relationships among male and female individuals, but also the stereotypic images of masculinity and femininity and the accepted norms that society expects of boys and girls in their adolescence. To further this discussion, gender regimes are extended to include the tensions introduced into the heterosexual dichotomy by the presence of individuals whose personal and expressed identities do not follow accepted male-female roles. This extension includes individuals of the LGBTQQA community who question the implicit (and often explicit) assumption in much of our society that all individuals are heterosexual, or that heterosexuality is normal. Gender regimes also include the pressure experienced by individuals to fulfill stereotypic images of their assigned dualistic genders (male or female). Instead, some individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, adopt nontraditional images of what is means to be “boy” and what it means to be “girl.” The conflict that arises when individuals do not adopt accepted male or female identities or do not present these identities according to heteronormative expectations is the result of a gender regime. |
| **LGBTQQA** | While different resources utilize a range of symbols in this term, varying in inclusivity and order, this survey will use the acronym LGBTQQA to represent individuals who identify their own sexual orientation as *l*esbian, *g*ay, *b*isexual, *t*ransgender, *q*ueer, *q*uestioning, or as an *a*lly to any of these orientations. The LGBTQQA community includes a huge range of diversity, especially relating to the individual struggles each may face in negotiating a predominantly heterosexual society. Among these orientations are the most commonly used terms of gay and lesbian, referring to individuals that are romantically or sexually attracted to others of the same sex or gender. Bisexual is used to refer to an individual who is attracted to partners of both the same and the opposite sex or gender. The orientation of transgender often is less concerned with sexual or romantic attraction as with individual identity. Transgender refers to individuals who themselves do not identify as either male or female in terms of sex or gender; transgender individuals oten present their sex or gender differently than their biological sex at birth, or may desire or have undergone surgical changes to their body in an effort to align their physical anatomy with their personal identity. The term queer, while previously (and still) viewed as derogatory by many, is becoming a more prevalent term used by individuals or groups who wish to be more inclusive in their language of gender; individuals who utilize this term are often characterized by a fluid sense of gender that may change periodically. Individuals who are questioning are those that do not or are yet not ready to identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, or any other orientation, but privately or actively show interest in romantic or sexual relationships that are not only heterosexual in nature. Questioning most often refers to individuals who are personally struggling with their own identity, negotiating a new social community, or reconciling their sexual orientation with other aspects of their identity as well as internal or external pressures. The newest term to be added to acronyms describing this community of individuals is ally, referring to a broad range of individuals, many of whom identify as heterosexual, but support those who identify as other than heterosexual. Allies either privately or actively support the LGBTQ community in social and political work surrounding issues with which the community is concerned. Allies sometimes suffer discrimination for taking stances in support of individuals who identify as a part of the LGBTQ community. |

**References**

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