

Addendum and *Recommendations* to the

Update on Girls in San Francisco: *A Decade of Success and Challenges*

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Mission

The San Francisco Commission and Department on the Status of Women promotes equitable treatment and fosters the advancement of women and girls throughout San Francisco through policies, legislation, and programs, both within City and County government and in the private sector.

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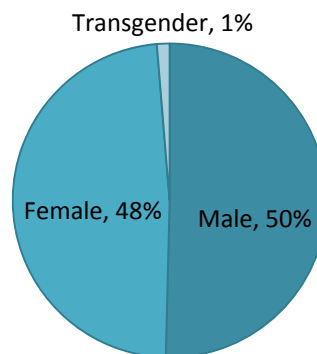
Introduction

In the spring of 2012, the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women updated *A Report on Girls in San Francisco, Benchmarks for the Future* (2003) with an emphasis on young people’s right to health, right to live a life free of violence, and the right to education. All of these are core principles of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW). The *Update on Girls in San Francisco: A Decade of Success and Challenges* was discussed in May 2012 at a town hall and presented to the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women and community partners on June 27, 2012 at a public hearing on the report and its findings. At this hearing, local agencies and nonprofits working with girls introduced additional data on girls. The Commission invited City Departments involved with youth and community partners to present at the public hearing and offer additional data and recommendations. The Juvenile Probation Department provided a profile of girls in the 2011 *Statistical Report*, providing a recent update on girls in the juvenile justice system. The San Francisco Unified School District’s (SFUSD) Support Services for LGBTQ Youth presented new data from the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, focusing on the health of lesbian and bisexual high school students. The *Addendum to the Update on Girls in San Francisco* supplements the *Update* with these findings and includes recommendations made at the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women meeting on June 27, 2012.

I. Demographics: Gender and Sexual Identity

In 2011, the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) reported that 48.3% of middle school students were female, 50.4% were male, and 1.3% were transgender.

Figure 24: San Francisco Public Middle School Students by Gender, 2011¹



¹ San Francisco Unified School District, Student, Family and Community Support Department, “Support Services for LGBTQ Youth: Keeping our LGBTQ Youth Safe and in School. 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results.” <http://healthiersf.org/LGBTQ/GetTheFacts/docs/LGBTQ_websiteHealthSurvey1011.pdf>, page 6. Data for high school students is found in the update, page 12, Figure 3.

For the past decade, the YRBSS surveyed the sexual orientation and gender of randomized samples of female and male high school students in the San Francisco Unified School District. Comparing survey results in 2001 and 2011 in Figure 25, girls who identified as lesbians increased from 0.7% to 1.3%, which is similar to the increase in the percent of boys who identified as gay. There was a substantial increase in female students who identified as bisexuals (3.9% to 7.2%), compared to the slight decrease in bisexual boys (2.1% to 1.8%). Whereas in 2001 the percent of bisexual girls were roughly double that of bisexual boys, in 2011 the percent of bisexual girls were four times that of bisexual boys. For both girls and boys, the percent of those who were “Not Sure” of their sexual orientation decreased between 2001 and 2011. Overall, the percent of high school girls identifying as lesbian or bisexual has increased, and the percent of girls “Not Sure” has decreased.

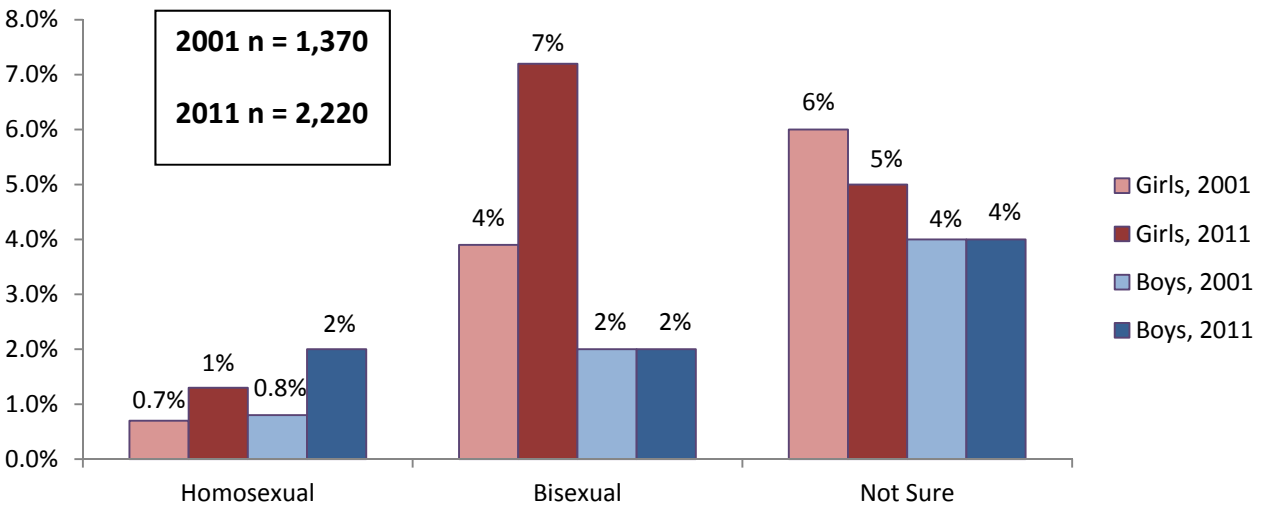


Figure 25: Percent of San Francisco Public High School Students Identified by Sexual Orientation and Gender, 2001 and 2011²

Figure 26 illustrates an analysis of samples from pooled high school YRBSS data from 2001 to 2009, comparing the ethnic makeup of San Francisco’s overall high school population with the ethnic makeup of San Francisco high school youth represented in the LGB population.³ As indicated below, Chinese students make up almost 20% of the LGB population. African Americans make up almost 15% of the LGB population, but are only 10% of the student population. The percent of African American students represented in the LGB population is significantly higher than African American representation in the overall high school population. In the same way, the percent of students in the LGB population who are American Indian/Alaska Native, White, or of multiple races (Hispanic) are at least doubly represented in proportion to their ethnic representation within the overall high school population. Chinese and Filipino LGB students, on the other hand, represent less than half of their respective ethnicity in the LGB population in proportion to the overall high school population. Hispanic/Latino and Other Asians are the ethnic subgroups most proportionate in their representation within the LGB and overall high school populations.

² San Francisco Unified School District, Student, Family and Community Support Department, “Youth Risk Behavior Results on the health and wellness of lesbian and bisexual students attending SFUSD high schools.” June 27, 2012.

³ LGB stands for Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual. The SFUSD uses the acronym “LGB” to refer to lesbian, gay, or bisexual students. Transgender and questioning students are not included in these data sets.

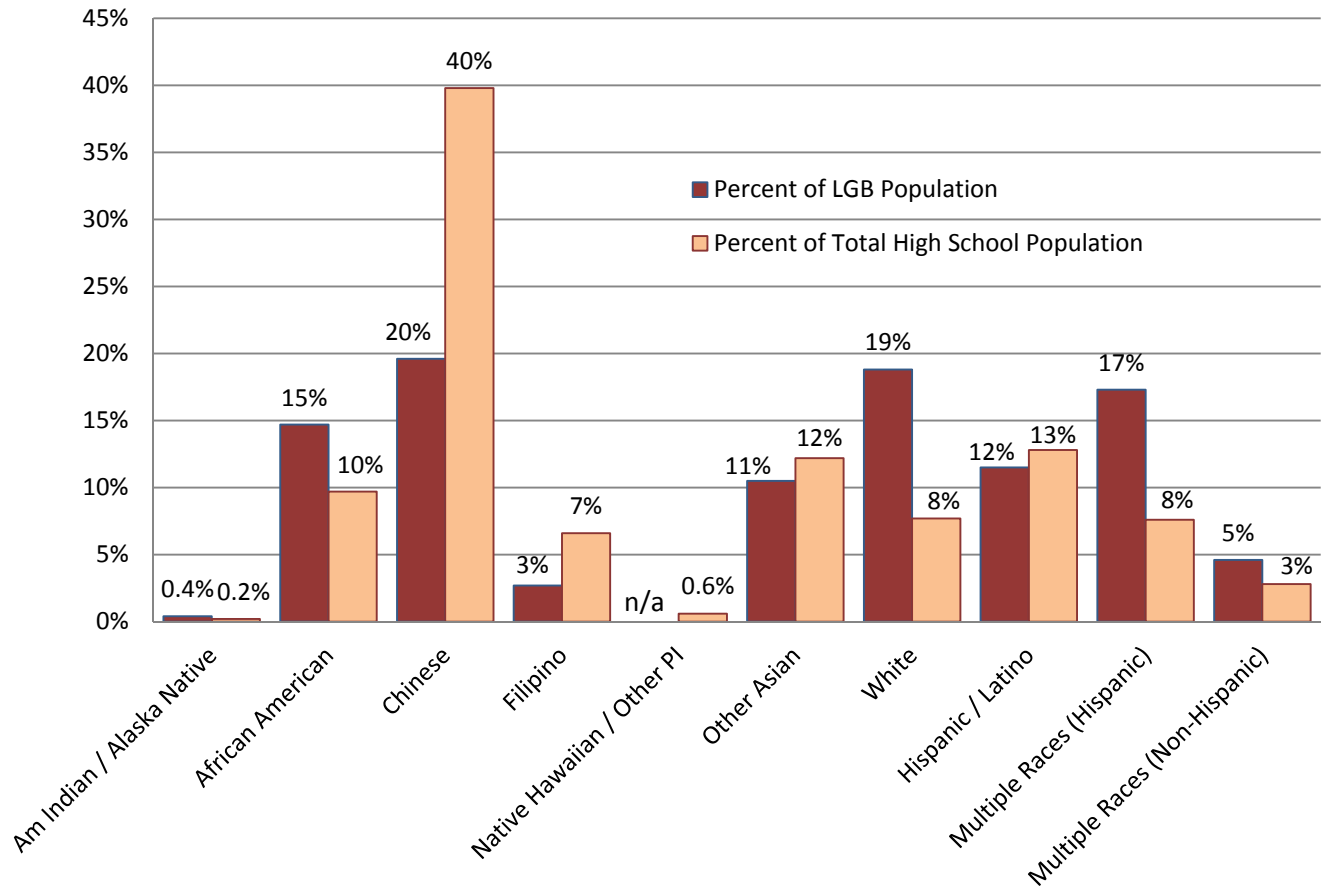


Figure 26: Percent of San Francisco Public High School Students by Race, in the LGB Population and Overall High School Population, 2001-2009⁴

⁴ Ibid. Pooling data from multiple years improves the reliability of results, especially when analyzing less common behaviors in population subgroups. Each statistic represents 9 years of counts. Here, n/a means there is not enough data to generate weighted data for a population estimate.

II. Safety: Safety at School

Figure 27 illustrates data pooled from 2001 through 2009 regarding the percent of high school students of different sexual orientation and gender who reported being bullied, entering a fight, or feeling unsafe. For both genders, the LGB student is about 2½ times more likely to feel unsafe during a given month compared to a heterosexual student of the same gender, and has a 20-21% chance of entering a fight. Compared to heterosexual females, lesbian or bisexual females are roughly three times as likely to be bullied or be in a fight during one year (24% compared to 9% and 20% to 6%), and more than twice as likely to feel unsafe within one month (14% compared to 6%). Though gay or bisexual Males are more than 20% more likely to be bullied during the year compared to heterosexual males (13% compared to 37%), the chances of entering a fight are not significantly increased.

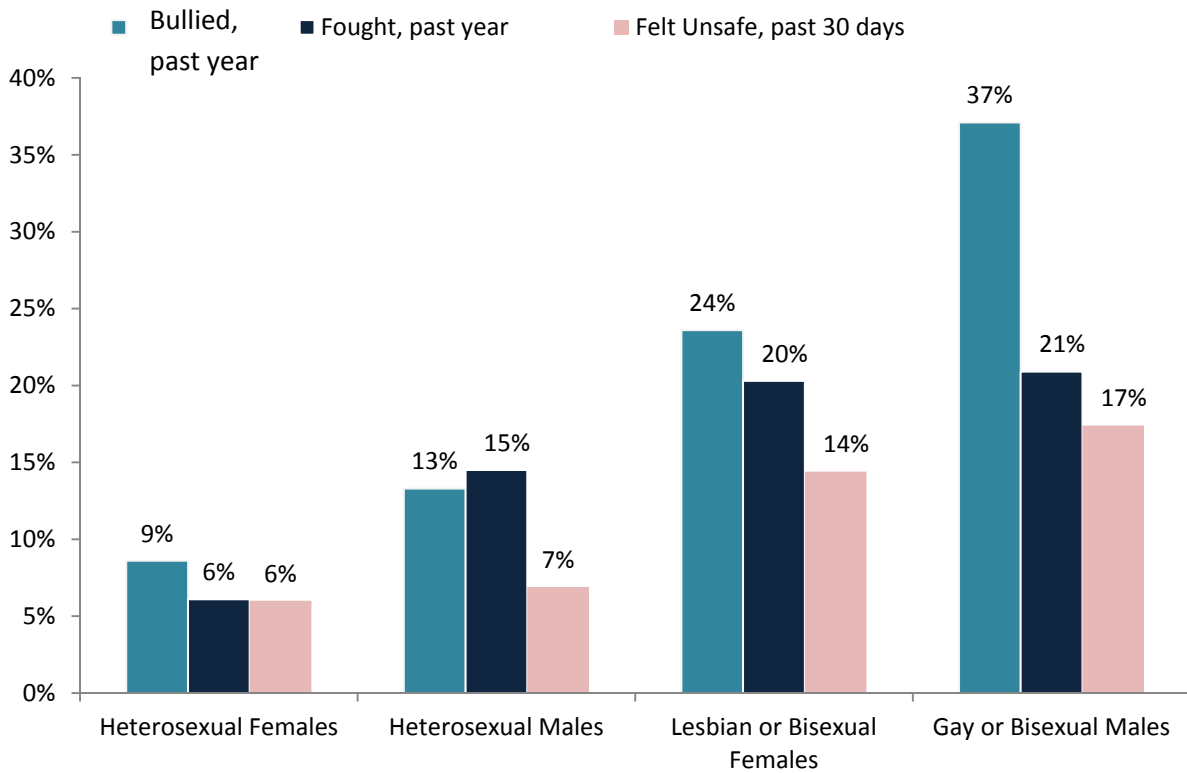


Figure 27: Percent of San Francisco Public High School Students by Sexual Orientation and Gender Who Were Bullied, Fought in the Past Year, or Felt Unsafe Within the Past 30 Days, 2001-2009⁵

⁵ San Francisco Unified School District, Student, Family and Community Support Department, "Youth Risk Behavior Results on the health and wellness of lesbian and bisexual students attending SFUSD high schools." June 27, 2012.

III. Health: Mental Health and Suicide

Figure 28 illustrates the mental health and suicide risk of high school students by sexual orientation and gender. Heterosexual females are more likely to experience symptoms of depression (30%) and consider suicide (15%) than heterosexual males (22% and 9%). A majority of lesbian or bisexual females experience symptoms of depression during a given year (53%). Lesbian or bisexual females have a dramatically higher likelihood of experiencing symptoms of depression and seriously considering suicide compared to any other group. They are more than 20% more likely to experience symptoms of depression in a given year compared to heterosexual females. Lesbian or bisexual females are more than twice as likely than heterosexual females, and more than four times as likely than heterosexual males to seriously consider committing suicide.

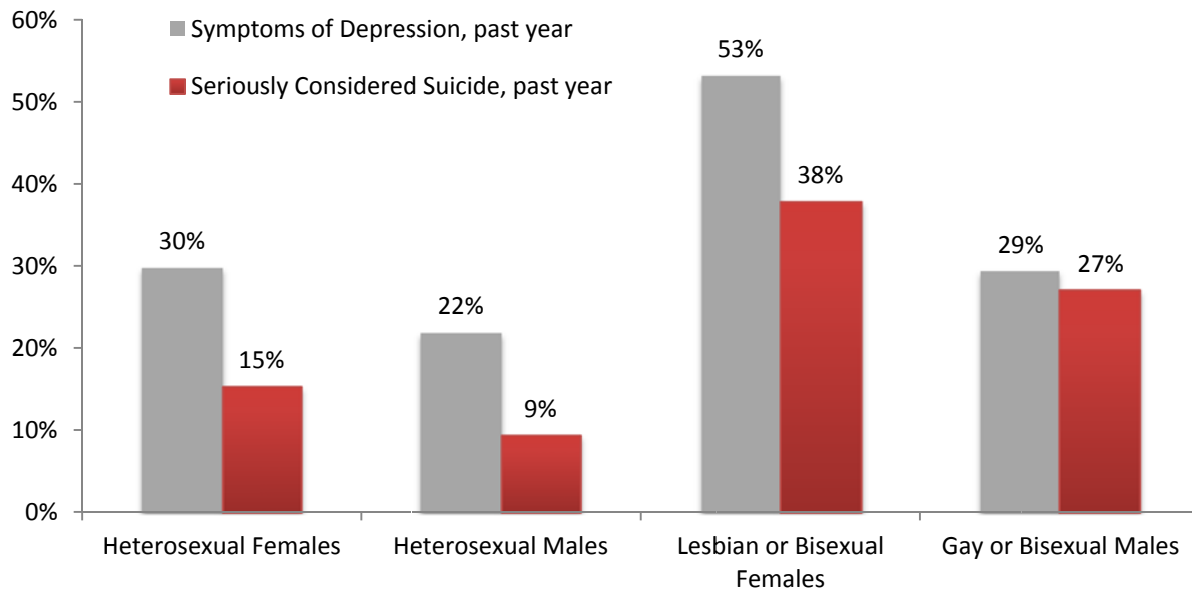


Figure 28: Percent of San Francisco Public High School Students by Sexual Orientation and Gender Showing Symptoms of Depression Compared to Serious Consideration of Suicide, 2001-2009⁶

This issue of possibly increased depression rates for lesbian or bisexual females continues into many other topics such as attempted suicide, tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use. For example, 67.5% of lesbian or bisexual females report ever trying a cigarette, compared to the 37.2% of heterosexual females who have, and gay or bisexual males who have (60.1%).⁷ The proportion of the entire lesbian or bisexual female population that plans and attempts suicide is considerably higher than all other groups. This population also holds the highest likelihood of ever having sex, as well as having used alcohol or drugs before the last time having sex.⁸

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

IV. Demographics: Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

Chief William Sifferman of the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department presented recent data on girls in the juvenile justice system. In 2011, there was a total of 168 (duplicated) counts of Juvenile Hall bookings for criminal offenses. Chief Sifferman reported that the most common lengths of stay were 2 days (22 counted) and 3 days (14 counted). About 30% of stays were no longer than 4 days.⁹ He also reported that the top criminal offenses girls were booked into Juvenile Hall for in 2011 were robbery, assault, burglary, assault battery, and prostitution.¹⁰

Race/Ethnic Origin	2000 Count	2011 Count	Percent in 2000	Percent in 2011
African American	451	100	61%	60%
Asian	47	10	6%	5%
Hispanic	102	42	14%	25%
Other	26	8	3.5%	5%
White	109	8	15%	5%
Grand Total	735	168	100%	100%

Table 18: Count of Juvenile Hall Bookings for Criminal Offenses, 2000 and 2011¹¹

⁹ San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department. "2011 Statistical Report." City and County of San Francisco. March 1, 2012. <<http://www.sfgov3.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=1850>>.

¹⁰ San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department. "2011 Statistical Report." City and County of San Francisco. March 1, 2012. <<http://www.sfgov3.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=1850>>.

¹¹ Ibid, and San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department. "2000 Statistics." City and County of San Francisco. August 20, 2001. <http://www.sfgov3.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/juvprobation/2001annualreport_statistics.pdf>.

Key Recommendations

At the public hearing, representatives from City Departments, community agencies, and nonprofits highlighted what they thought were the issues of most concern, as identified in the *Update on Girls in San Francisco*. Agencies provided recommendations based on their experience and committed to working with the Department to further the advancement of girls. Below are four key recommendations resulting from the meeting.

1. Increase Girls Participation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)

Work with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and the Board of Supervisors to explore ways to increase high school girls' enrollment in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) courses. Explore partnering with local San Francisco and Silicon Valley corporations to create a new STEM Initiative that emphasizes outreach to elementary schools, pushes additional computer programming course(s) in high schools, and promotes STEM education for girls and women. Include STEM education as one of the issues at the proposed 5th World Conference on Women. (*Update on Girls in San Francisco: A Decade of Success and Challenges (Update)* Recommendations 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

2. Improve Outcomes for LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer) Youth

Work with the SFUSD and the Board of Supervisors to examine the status of San Francisco's LGBTQ youth by improving data collection on LGBTQ youth by gender. Investigate the disproportionate percentage of depressed, suicidal, bullied, and pregnant lesbian/bisexual girls. In response to the findings, strategize action plans such as developing comprehensive sex education programs for same-sex couples, mental health care, and sharing of data with other city agencies and nonprofits. (*Update* Recommendation 1.5)

3. Decrease Dating Violence

Work with the Family Violence Council, Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, and our Violence Against Women Partner Agencies to continue to examine best practices for girls' dating violence services, while considering alternative intervention methods such as incorporating the cultural strengths of girls' communities. Increase support for agencies and programs that provide healthy relationship education, and create more resources and accessible services (such as peer counseling programs) for victims of teen dating violence. (*Update* Recommendation 3.1)

4. Decrease Disproportionality of African American/Latina Girls in the Juvenile Justice and Foster Care Systems

In conjunction with the Juvenile Probation Department, the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families and community based organizations, continue to explore the overrepresentation of African American and Hispanic/Latina girls in the juvenile justice and foster care systems, and their high rates of teen pregnancy. (*Update* Recommendations 1.3, 1.4, 2.3, 3.3)

Conclusion and Next Steps

Looking at trends in girls' lives over the past decade and reexamining key findings from the original report for the *Update on Girls in San Francisco: A Decade of Success and Challenges*, there were gaps in available information from the past decade, such as in criminal justice and the status of LGBTQ youth. The additional data provided by the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department and the San Francisco Unified School District's (SFUSD) Support Services for LGBTQ Youth at the public hearing before the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women filled in those gaps. We look forward to working with other City Departments and community organizations on identified issues of most concern—increasing girls' participation in STEM, improving outcomes for LGBTQ Youth, decreasing dating violence, as well as decreasing the disproportionality of African American and Latina girls in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

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