

HOW TO START A GENDERS AND SEXUALITIES ALLIANCE



Below you will find 8 steps to starting a GSA at your school. It covers everything from administrative directives and the GSA registration form to advertising meetings.

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND YOUR SCHOOL POLICY

Queer Student Alliance (QSA) clubs are to be treated like any other student club within Portland Public School and Oregon. There is an [Administrative Directive, 4.40.050-AD Student Clubs](#), that outlines how student clubs operate.

Having this information will help you as you seek out support from staff, teachers and administrators, and as you support students in creating this club.

[GSA
REGISTRATION
FORM](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)



STEP 2: FIND AN ADVISOR

School employees or volunteers can be an advisor for the GSA in your school. Union represented staff who serve in the role of advisor for an affinity group are entitled to additional pay for their time. Please speak with your union rep for more information.

STEP 3: FIND INTERESTED STUDENTS

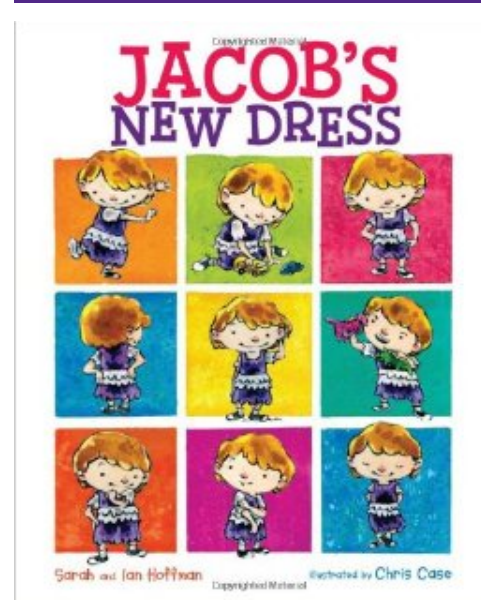
Finding LGBTQ2SIA+ students interested in a GSA can be helpful in getting others engaged in attending this new affinity group. Discussing the formation of the club with the school counselor/social worker could aid you in finding other interested LGBTQ2SIA+ students. While we love our allies, this space is just for students who are LGBTQ2SIA+.

STEP 4: FILL OUT QSA REGISTRATION FORM

You can locate the GSA Registration Form on page one of this guide in the purple box on the right. The LGBTQ2SIA+ Program Manager will contact you after receiving it, and if they don't get back to you within a week, email the program manager. This form will have self-reflection questions for you to answer about why you want to be an advisor. It may take 30-60 minutes to fill out, so please give yourself enough time to do so. Talking to the Principal and Assistant Principal can be helpful to find out if they will be allies to the GSA.



**“NOTHING I
ACCEPT ABOUT
MYSELF CAN BE
USED AGAINST ME
TO DIMINISH ME.”**
- AUDRE LORDE



STEP 5: PLAN YOUR MEETING AGENDA, PLACE & TIME

Choose a day of the week and time that doesn't overlap with many other clubs or sports. Then decide how frequently the GSA will meet - weekly, biweekly or monthly.

As long as a club meets during non-instructional time during the school day, parents, guardians, and family members do not have to opt-in or opt-out. Students get to decide how they spend their recess and lunch time. If the group meets at a time when students would have to miss class to attend or is before/after school, then students must get permission to attend.

STEP 6: ADVERTISE YOUR FIRST MEETING

Advertise the details about the first meeting through school announcements, newsletter, or hanging fliers in your building. You want as many people to know about the new GSA as possible!

STEP 7: HAVE YOUR FIRST MEETING!

Great goals for your first meeting are to get to know each other, establish group agreements, and discuss what type of QSA the group wants to be. Additionally, determining your group's mission will enable you all to focus your efforts throughout the year. The three main types of QSAs are social, support, and activism. QSAs can also be a combination of all three.



STEP 7: HAVE YOUR FIRST MEETING! CONTINUED

Social GSA - a space for community and connection among peers.

Support GSA - focuses on providing support to those that may be struggling with their sexual or gender identity and/or how they are treated by family, classmates and teachers.

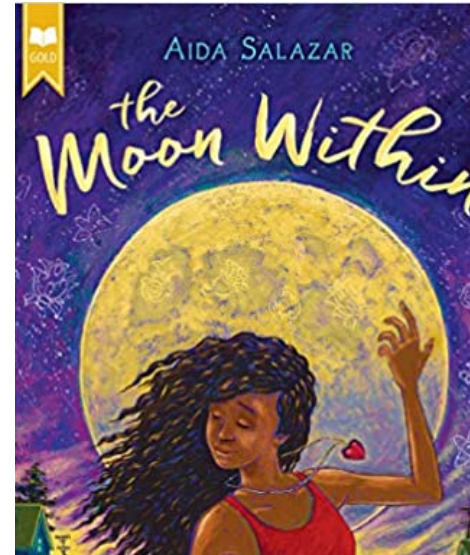
Activism GSA - focuses on educating students and staff and improving the culture within the school for LGBTQ2SIA+ students.

Finally decide where the digital club binder will be stored so that it can be kept to pass on to the next Advisor.

STEP 8: SECOND MEETING: STUDENT'S RIGHTS'

For your second meeting, be sure that all LGBTQ2SIA+ students know their rights as students, [what Title IX](#) is, and how to make a Title IX report.

Their rights' include being able to change their name and gender marker with the school according to administrative directive, [4.30.061-AD Transgender, Nonbinary and Gender Diverse Students](#). Students also have a right to access the restroom that aligns with their gender. Update students on the development of gender neutral bathrooms and locker rooms for your school.



STEP 8: SECOND MEETING: STUDENT'S RIGHTS' CONTINUED

There may not be time during the second meeting to come up with ideas with students about future meetings. You'll likely have to wait until your third meeting. Here are some ideas to get the conversation started: discussion topics, projects, speakers, games, and/or Zoom or in-person events. Refer to the GSA Year At A Glance for annual holidays and important dates in history.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Your group's decision on what kind of GSA they want to be and what they want to do may largely depend on where they fall in the K12 continuum. K-3 student groups may largely focus on how to be friends/[up-standers](#), how to handle big feelings (check out [OK You](#)), and how to make sure everyone feels welcomed in the space and in their building. Activities may include reading [books](#) that feature LGBTQ+ characters, making posters, advocating for restroom access, a pride parade, etc.

It is important, however, not to discount the strong desire of little ones to want to get involved when they see something unjust in their building, community, state, or our country. Be creative in finding ways for our youngest learners to flex their muscles for the greater good!

For more ideas, always remember to cruise the Google Shared Drive to what's there. Conversely, if you have cool activity ideas, share them in the grade specific GSA Shared Drive > Presentation-Lesson Plans folder. Of course, you can always send out an email to the GSA Advisor Google group or to the Program Manager for LGBTQ+ Supports for assistance with finding activities to do with your group.

