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## Online GLBT School To Launch In 2010

A new online high school targeting GLBT students, believed to be the first of its kind, plans to launch in January 2010.

**By Chris Jai Centeno**

A new online high school targeting LGBT students, believed to be the first of its kind, plans to launch in January 2010.

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The brainchild of David Glick, who has been part of the virtual school environment as a consultant for quite some time in addition to 25 years of experience in the education field, promises to offer students a safe and affirming place within the virtual academy.

It will be an environment where students don't have to worry about harassment, Glick said. "Diversity, multicultural education... has been a big interest of mine, and what the school system does or does not do for disenfranchised students."

According to the 2007 National School Climate Survey, released by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, researchers found that nearly nine out of ten LGBT students experienced harassment in their schools. More than half of the students said that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation. Almost 32 per cent of students missed a class, and the grade point average of students harassed were almost half a grade lower than their peers.

The GLBT Online High School idea was originally launched in November, and since then, a couple dozen students have already applied from across the country, hoping for a spot. Although there are no specific criteria on what kind of students they're looking for, the school will welcome applicants from all other spectrums.

"You don't have to fall squarely within one category or another. We also recognize that some students might have poor academic or behavioral histories. We see that as a natural part that have led to many things," Glick said. "For the application, we have one question that asks if you were suspended or expelled in school. One of the applications that we have, a girl said that, 'I got sick of being teased as being butch, and I punched someone in the nose.'"

Glick believes that many students and educators have expressed excitement with the idea since it is provocative and positive, and ultimately provides an outlet for students to focus on the academics.

"They have the community to connect online in a safe, monitored, supportive and academic environment, where they can discuss things that they will discuss outside otherwise. We can have academic discussions about things that most schools would runaway from."

Regarding its curriculum, courses offered by the school will consist of mainstream courses with a chance to customize each student's needs.

"We're also in the process of creating an LGBT studies class for students to learn more about the queer community, and to focus on various issues, political or otherwise, it faces," Glick said.



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