A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: SUPPORTING TRANSGENDER YOUTH IN OUR SCHOOLS

IN ARIZONA...

- AZ <u>does</u> have a "Don't Say Gay" law that bars or explicitly restricts educators from discussing LGBT people or issues in schools
- AZ does not have inclusive non-discrimination or anti-bullying laws or policies that explicitly protect LGBT students
- AZ does not ban conversion therapy for LGBT youth (Pima County banned fee-for-service conversion therapy!)
- AZ does not explicitly protect LGBT youth in the child welfare system

>>>>>> The Williams Institute expects that there are approximately 2,500 – 5,500 transgender youth aged 13-17 and between 2,500 and 8,500 transgender young adults aged 18 to 24.
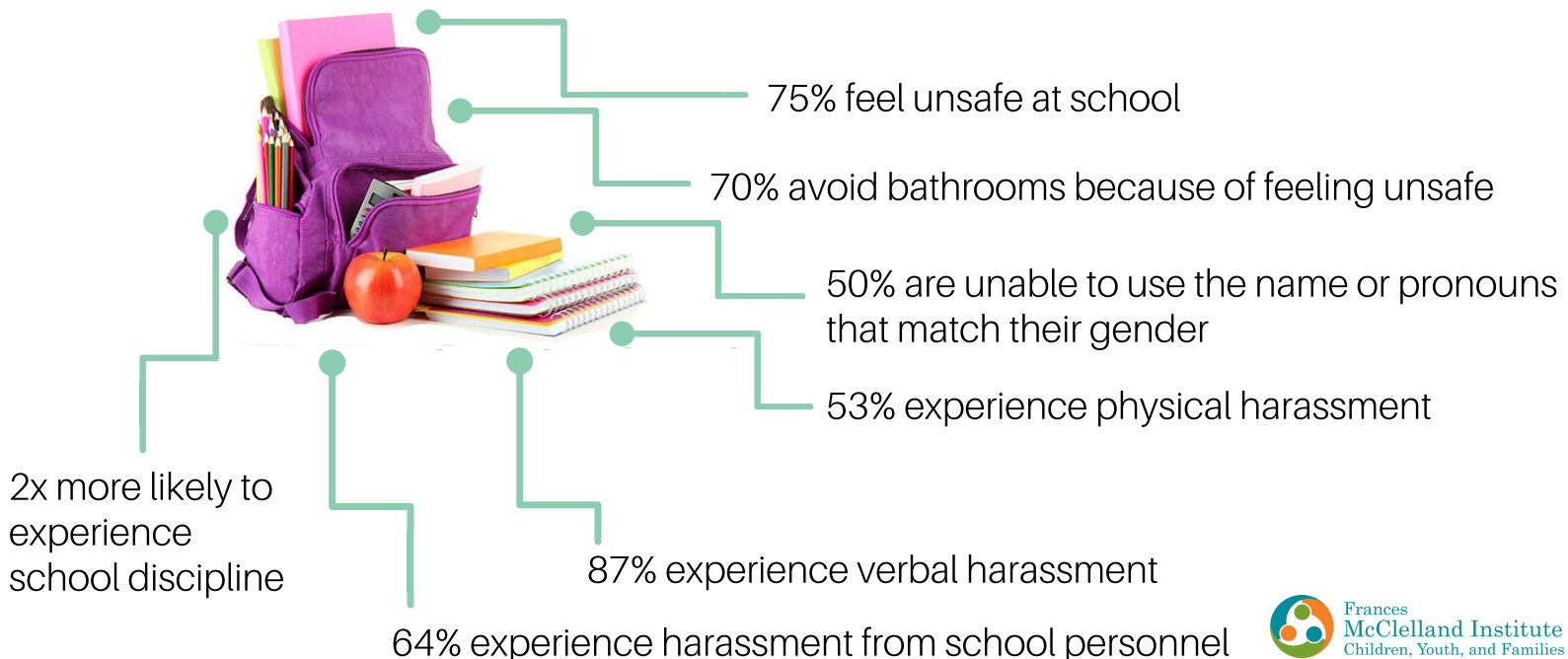
DISPARITIES...

Transgender youth are more likely than cisgender youth to report:

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- **2.5 to 4x more likely:** Drug and alcohol use
- **4x more likely:** Depression and anxiety
- **3 to 8x more likely:** Suicide ideation and attempts

Notably, they are also more likely than cisgender youth to experience the following in school:

75% feel unsafe at school

70% avoid bathrooms because of feeling unsafe

50% are unable to use the name or pronouns that match their gender

53% experience physical harassment

2x more likely to experience school discipline

87% experience verbal harassment

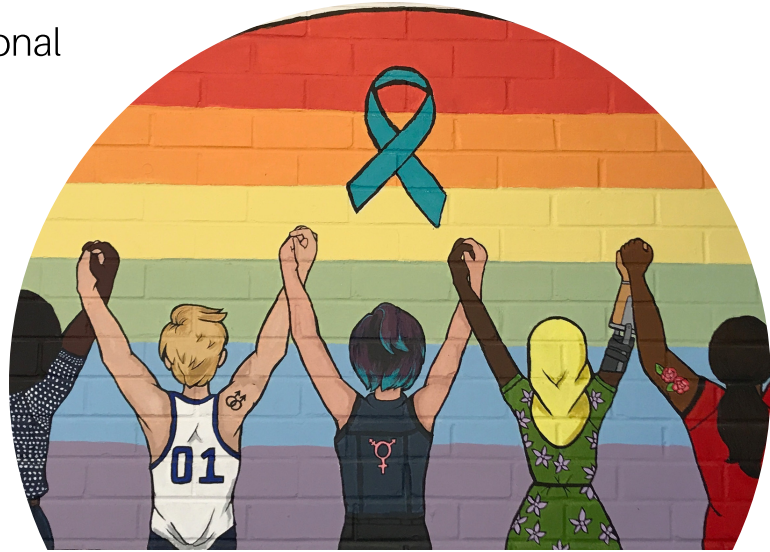64% experience harassment from school personnel

TWELVE WAYS THAT YOU CAN MAKE SCHOOLS SAFER TODAY!

Structural-Level - Policies:

1. Advocate for inclusive and enumerated anti-bullying, non-discrimination, and anti-harassment policies that include gender identity and expression

2. Enact preferred name, gender, and pronoun policies

3. Ensure access policies to school facilities are not exclusionary

4. Adopt professional development for educational staff on gender identity

5. Advocate for inclusive curriculum, including books that have trans narratives

6. Advocate for easily accessible information that is inclusive of transgender and gender diverse identities and expressions

Student-School Adult Level:

7. Ensure that students have access to at least one supportive adult (Be visible!)

8. Ensure students the right to form or maintain an active Gender-Sexuality (formerly Gay-Straight) Alliances or Similar Clubs

9. Teach school adults to intervene and stop harassment based on gender identity and expression

10. Use inclusive language (e.g., gender inclusive, "students" or "you all" rather than girls/boys)

Family-Student Level:

11. Help students craft the narrative about their identity and how to / when to share (e.g., language about previous name, pronouns)

12. Schools can be the HUB for parents and students to learn about trans-inclusive resources in the community