



Theresa Sparks
Executive Director

Edwin M. Lee
Mayor

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee Minutes of the September 18, 2012 Meeting

Committee Members Present: Commissioner Pappas, Amos Lim, Angie Perone, Bart Broome, Bianca Polovina, Bonnie Milluso, Corrin Buchanan, Cynthia Yeung, Diane Alcalá, Fayaz Rajani, Matthew Valdez, Mike Van Nguyen, Patrick Pablo, Paul Klees, Tracy Garza, and Vaughn Villaverde.

Committee Members Absent: Commissioner Mavis, Amy Whelan, Marcelle Million, Mark Murphy, Mark Snyder, Neo Veavea, Ray Rudolph, and Sterling Johnson.

Staff Present: Nadia Babella

Community Members Present: Jodi Schwartz, Jonas Wang, Alex.

1. **Call to order and roll call**

Commissioner Pappas called the meeting to order. Nadia Babella called the roll. There was quorum.

2. **Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda**

Jonas Wang introduced himself. He is volunteering with the Human Rights Commission to work on developing LGBT asylum training. Jodi Schwartz, Executive Director of LYRIC, and Alex, intern at API Wellness Center, introduced themselves.

3. **Approval of August 21, 2012**

Motion was made to adopt the minutes with corrections. Motion was seconded and approved.

4. **Panel Discussion on SFUSD LGBTQ Student Experiences**

Patrick Pablo gave an overview of the history of the youth workgroup and the services provided to LGBTQ youth to ensure that they are receiving quality services at school. The group has been speaking with the school district. The purpose of this panel is to hear about school culture from the perspective of LGBTQ youth. Brandon Vasquez went to El Camino High and currently attends San Jose State. He identifies as gay. Stephanie Rauda graduated from George Washington last year and identifies as queer, transgender, gender queer, agender and gender non-binary. The panelists were asked the following questions:

Describe the level of anti-LGBTQ bullying you experienced or witnessed in school?

Brandon did not experience it himself, because his class was supportive. He did witness it in younger classes, though, especially towards his friend's younger sister who identifies as bisexual and who heard insults but never sought assistance. Stephanie stated that there was no physical bullying, but verbal harassment was nonstop, 24/7. Ze heard "that's so gay" or the use of the "f" word. It was mentally exhausting.

Do you feel safer in school or outside of school? Explain why.

For the most part, Brandon felt safe in school because he felt no hatred from his classmates, who were all liberal. Granted, he was not open about his sexuality. He didn't hide it, but he also wasn't allowed to express it, the way a heterosexual student can or does. Outside of school his parents cautioned him, saying that the way he dressed drew attention to himself, and that made him feel paranoid. Stephanie said ze felt safer outside of school. Ze did not feel physically unsafe, but at the same time, did not feel comfortable. Ze did not meet other queer people even though ze was out and visible. Outside of school, ze was involved with queer organizations, met more queer young people and felt more supported.

Please describe a time when you felt disrespected in school, be specific in terms of teachers, staff, fellow students, curriculum or activities?

Brandon knew of other queer students but was not friends with them. In one instance, two of them got in trouble and were sent out of class. As they were leaving, they asked him to join them. He felt disrespected because he felt they singled him out and outed him without consideration as to what he wanted or how out he was. Students are asked to write "Dear Teacher" letters in the beginning of the school year to communicate to the teacher anything they'd like. Ze sent hir teachers a letter explaining how ze preferred using gender neutral pronouns. Ze hoped that this would initiate a conversation. The only feedback ze received was that the letter was "interesting."

Have you or someone you know tried to report an incident of LGBT harassment or disrespect to faculty or staff? If so, what was your experience? If not, what do you think prevents people from reporting incidents?

Brandon wasn't aware of incidents being reported. They had a very active GSA. He felt that students probably turned to other students in GSA's for support and not faculty. Stephanie recalled a time when the GSA co-president heard a slur. She brought it to the teacher's attention. The teacher tried to joke with the student who made the slur. She turned to the GSA advisor who told her how to report it. The principal met with the teacher and the student, with no adult support for the student who brought up the complaint. The teacher was only warned, but was not given any training.

Stephanie thinks that students don't report because they aren't aware of the complaint policy. Ze wrote an op-ed about this and discovered through research that the complaint policy should be visibly posted and students should be able to pick up a complaint and fill it out, but that wasn't the case in hir school.

What can teachers and staff do, especially in the classroom? What aren't they doing and what needs to be done in order to support you?

Stephanie states that ze wishes teachers had respected her gender pronoun preference and had asked hir more about it. Ze wished there had been class conversation and education about pronoun preferences. Brandon suggested that teachers pay more attention to conversation and hear key words like the "f" word, that's so gay, and homo and addressed it. He wished people received training on the use of words and language.

What can teachers, administrators, and the school district do to better support LGBTQ students as a whole? What would you do if you were in charge?

Stephanie recommended mandatory LGBTQ 101 and Trans 101 trainings that every teacher and staff has to attend. Additional training should be provided if there are complaints of incidents of discrimination to reinforce and relearn the material. Students should be encouraged to have open discussion about LGBTQ issues in history and health classes, in addition to sexuality and gender studies being incorporated into sex education classes. Schools should have LGBT sensitivity training like they have racial sensitivity trainings. Schools should continue to offer the LGBT elective class. Ze attended it and it was amazing. The class was at the LGBT Community Center. Ze wished they had it at schools.

Patrick opened the discussion for questions from Advisory Committee members.

Question: Did teachers use gender neutral pronouns after they received Stephanie's letter?

Answer: No, they did not use them. In fact they asked inappropriate and private questions about surgeries.

Question: Did you know whether there was a liaison at your school?

Answer: Brandon did not know them. Stephanie knew them because they planned and attended the GSA events. Ze also knew another teacher who was very supportive. Ze talked to them about the incident with the teacher. Ze did not think that students who did not attend GSA meetings would know who the liaison was.

Question: Was there a discussion or open dialogue about use of facilities?

Answer: Last year they tried to open gender neutral bathrooms. The principal was open to designating one of the bathrooms as gender neutral.

Question: Did teachers invite dialogue about sexuality and gender in health education classes or did they use more of a lecture format?

Answer: Teachers would ask if they had questions, but there was not much of a dialogue and only made a cursory gloss over of the LGBT subject. Stephanie had a history teacher who did a presentation on LGBT people throughout history. But there was not much in health class.

Question: Was there any place space in school that you considered a safe space - a physical space that you can retreat to or have community organizing?

Answer: Stephanie hung out at an after school program and the GSA was a part of the after school programming. It would have definitely been helpful, and ze would not have to hide in the bathroom if ze

was upset. I believe that every space should be a safe space. There was no space that was unsafe because the student body didn't focus on it. All of the classrooms had signs that said this is a safe space but, it really depended on the teacher. Hir English teacher went out of his way to create a comfortable space.

Question: Are there guidance counselors?

Answer: Yes, but the only interaction with them was after Stephanie yelled at a teacher. Ze didn't want to talk to them. At Brandon's school, counselors mainly focused on what colleges people would go to. There were very few counselors.

Question: After the incident with that teacher, did you talk to administration about how it should have been addressed?

Answer: They had to do their own research and it wasn't really addressed.

Question: Was there LGBT material in library regarding LGBT?

Answer: In the 9th grade Stephanie found some fiction.

Question: If someone was desperate and feeling terribly bad, would there be a place to go to?

Answer: Students would probably turn to the wellness centers and speak to the counselors there or turn to the GSA groups.

Question: Are there any final comments that you would like to share?

Answer: Brandon Felt like he was lucky in his high school experience because they did not focus on him being different. Stephanie was able to dig hir way through the school system to find some supportive teachers and find resources outside of school. Now ze has gone back to school and works with the GSA to offer more education.

Public comments

Jodi Schwartz from LYRIC thanked Stephanie and Brandon. LYRIC is in the pilot face of an exciting new school-based initiative. In addition to what is already working - e.g. LGBT classes, GSAs, policies - the school based initiative looks at how to normalize queerness in schools. When you want to do a change process you have to get everyone involved, reaching into a community and raising community leadership at all levels.

The first pilot program was Horace Mann middle school. This year LYRIC is at 3 more schools. They are working with a researcher to capture the model so it can be replicated. LYRIC is looking into providing support and the opportunity to learn as part of the regular school day rather than an isolated space from the rest of the school community. The program involves training for every teacher as part of a 4-session series. In addition, LYRIC is doing "parent work." LYRIC found out that folks basically need a space where they can ask a lot of questions and be safe. For example, straight folks like to hang out at LYRIC because they're relieved not to have to be a certain kind of a dude or a certain kind of a girl.

Students participate in six already occurring events and bring a LGBT focus. For example, they do queerifying African American month or queerifying Valentine's Day. As part of the pride celebration, LYRIC brings in older young people as well as current and former staff to provide LGBT and Trans 101 and training on Hate speech and your health for every student. Hopefully, LYRIC will have a research brief completed next month. Jodi hopes we stay plugged in and provide support for these programs to go to the full district. If you have questions, she can be reached at Jodi@lyric.org.

5. **Presentation by Derek Gerson on the Equalize Youth Project**

Derek Gerson was unable to attend. The presentation was postponed to a later meeting.

6. **Report Back from National Queer Asian Pacific Island Alliance Conference on Issues of HIV Prevention in AAPI Communities**

Ben Cabangun, Health Education Program Manager at API Wellness, presented at the conference. Mr. Cabangun shared with the Advisory Committee fact sheets issued by API Wellness. One fact sheet was on the national HIV and Asian Pacific Islander epidemic, and the other on the epidemic in San Francisco.

Nationwide, AAPIs have the highest rate of increase in new HIV infections in the nation, the only statistically significant growth among any racial or ethnic group. Also, AAPIs have the lowest HIV testing of all races or ethnicities. Nearly two-thirds of Asian Americans and over 70% of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders have never been tested for HIV. One in three AAPIs living with HIV don't know it. When AAPIs do get tested, it is usually in the late stages in the disease's progression.

In San Francisco, AAPIs represent 34% of San Francisco's population yet have the lowest rates of people being tested. Lack of culturally and linguistically competent testers and service providers contributes to the low testing. 60% of AAPI infections are foreign-born, with recently immigrated Filipino men in their mid to late 30's accounting for a large percentage. The largest percentage of AIDS cases are among Filipinos and Chinese. San Francisco data matches what is seen nationally.

API Wellness advocated for more culturally and linguistically appropriate services. In addition, Mr. Cabangun explained that current data collection is flawed. As of 2010, the SF Department of Public Health decided to no longer disaggregate API data. API Wellness recommended that data be disaggregated by API ethnicities in order to have an effective response. Data informs policy and policy informs funding. Mr. Cabangun's presentation was followed by questions from the Advisory Committee.

Question: It is interesting that local data matches national data and it is surprising that cities as different as Boston and Atlanta are experiencing the same thing as San Francisco.

Answer: Yes, and in those cities, they too are seeing late testers, who are referred to as "ER testers" because they do not discover the HIV status until they are in the emergency room.

Question: Are there any supplemental statistics post 2010?

Answer: No, unfortunately in 2011 the data was not disaggregated. DPH has some data of HIV infection rates at 3 years. Among all of the other racial groups HIV infection rates are declining, but among API communities the rates are going up and meeting everyone in the middle.

Question: Is the Public Health Department briefed on these statistics?

Answer: Yes, they know about them.

Question: What does the term Asian include? Does it include Arab or South Asian? Culturally there are differences.

Answer: At API Wellness people self-identify and API disaggregates - for example, by South Asian. The conference emphasized the importance of disaggregation because of such cultural diversity.

Question: Last year we had a panel in Bayview in which API community members came to ask that funding be restored. The conference made them realize the importance of funding culturally competent services. In addition, the conference brought up the importance of the API community helping each other out. For example, if a provider is doing Hep B testing, they should offer HIV testing as well and visa a versa. API Wellness offers Hep B testing, but many Hep B sights don't offer HIV testing. This may be as a result of homophobia or something else. How can we as a committee help address these issues?

Answer: It would be helpful for the committee to work on normalizing cross cultural organizing. We all serve different communities, but the socio culture factors that drive the HIV epidemic ,like homophobia, racism, stigma, poverty, etc, affect all communities, not just one. How can we create cross cultural alliances that look at those factors together.

Question: Has the oral test had any effect on increase in testing because it offers privacy?

Answer: They don't know yet. It's likely to be pricey, about \$70, and you may have to ask the pharmacist for it, so it's not very private. We'll wait to see.

Question: If you don't disaggregate, then you don't understand what is driving the data and what cultures are affected because of the wide spread difference in API cultures?

Answer: Agree.

Question: What was the Department of Public Health's reason for not disaggregating the data?

Answer: They originally disaggregated the data because there were requests for it, but since there are no longer requests, they will only do it if you request it. They are responsive if you request it.

Question: How can you reach out to recent immigrants to encourage early testing

Answer: You can pair HIV with Hep B testing because it's not stigmatized compared to other diseases. Hep B free is known in the community.

Question: Is the religious community in the API communities a help or a hindrance?

Answer: With the youth, it's more of a barrier. Religions in the API community are so complex and diverse that it's hard to answer. But there are also opportunities to explore.

7. **Workgroup Report Back**

Beyond Castro Workgroup

The group met in Bayview on August 28 to discuss District 10 LGBT elder issues. Approximately 10 people attended, including staff from the Department of Ageing and Adult Services, Openhouse, NCLR, Institute on Aging, Consumer Rights for Community Living, Bayview Multipurpose Senior Center and community members. There was a productive dialogue about social services, housing, inclusivity, and

safety. The work group is confirming panelists for the October meeting in Bayview. The next workgroup meeting is October 2 at 6 PM.

Housing Workgroup

The next meeting is scheduled for October 2 at 6 pm. The group will have a presented from the Shelter Monitoring Committee to discuss gaps in services in the shelter system. The group hopes to present final recommendations on the group on the November meeting. The group has been focusing on shelters and has not gathered enough information on the experience of LGBT residents in SROs. If anyone has any thought about this, please contact the housing workgroup.

Jodi added that there have been developments in youth housing. A group of providers have been meeting with Supervisor Campos and Bevan Dufty and are looking at 4 options:

1. Using money from the ad back process for emergency housing
2. Looking at 3 Castro sights for new developments
3. Larkin Street taking over current Castro housing and managing it
4. Using land trust to take over city-owned property and having youth democratically run the housing.

It would be good to rally and push the city to release properties that are not being used for land trust, especially if there's any push-back from neighbors for any of the new developments. For example, there's been a 3 year battle to get youth housing in the Marina. It's important to shift the message in the LGBT community about how we need to take care of our own.

Youth Workgroup

The workgroup is meeting on the 2nd Thursday of the month. The next meeting is Oct. 11 at 6 PM. We are hoping to disseminate these questions to the GSAs to do a more qualitative study to get more data. We would use that in addition to auditing the resolution.

8. Member Reports on Activities in the Community

The Transgender Employment Empowerment Initiative is providing "Trans Code" classes, computer programming classes to trans, gender queer and gender nonconforming folks. There are about 15 people in the class. One instructor works at Google.

Mike Nguyen was invited to speak the a panel of an anti-bullying summit. The panel asked administrators, teachers, lawmakers, and law enforcement to think of ways to support LGBT youth. Mike will share the information from the panel with the workgroup and incorporate it into the report.

9. Commissioner Report

Commissioner Pappas attended the summit Mike spoke about. The day prior to the summit, approximately 3,000 young people watched the movie "Bully." It was a very very moving experience.

The next day there was an all-day conference on bullying that was attended by Gavin Newsome, Mayor Lee, Melinda Haag, Director Sparks and Commissioner Davis.

Commissioner Pappas met with Mark Snyder and Mason Davis from Transgender Law Center to learn more about the experience of transgender shelter clients and the work that the Transgender Law Center does.

Commissioner Pappas met with Boris Dittrich, the keynote speaker for the Tides Foundation event, and the Advocacy Director of Human Rights Watch's LGBT program. Mr. Dittrich is known for introducing the first successful same-sex marriage law when he was a member of the Dutch Parliament.

Dittrich made quite an impression on UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and sent Youtube clip regarding sensitivity to the LGBT community which everyone should see.

New Conservatory Theatre uses art to educate on LGBT issues. They put together a play called "Rights of Passage" which includes interesting vignettes by talented actors. The AC should Invite Ed Decker, the force behind New Conservatory Theatre, to discuss how arts can be used for social change.

10. **Staff Report**

The Commission will be holding a roundtable discussion on the use of condoms as evidence in prosecuting prostitution-related claims. Human Rights Watch recently issued a report entitled "Sex Workers at Risk." The Commission will host the author of the report and has invited representatives from the SFPD, the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and the Department of Public Health, as well as community based organizations such as St. James Infirmary and SAGE Project, to begin a dialogue on balancing health and human rights concerns with law enforcement concerns. Jose Romero is hosting a commemoration of the ten year anniversary of the death of Gwen Araujo. Gwen's mother will be present to celebrate Gwen's life as a hero and Gwen's contributions to transgender rights. Commissioner Pappas and HRC staff met with CUAV staff to speak about their work. They discussed having the November meeting at the CUAV offices in the Mission as part of the Beyond Castro series.

11. **Announcements**

On October 3, the District Attorney's Office, along with the SFUSD and community organizations, will announce a video challenge. The challenge will ask for youth ages 13-18 to submit a 60 second video on the effects of bullying and what bullying means to them.

On October 4, the Transgender Law Center will host its 10 year anniversary Gala, "Spark," at the San Francisco War Memorial & Performing Arts Center.

Paul invited people who are interested in the efficacy of new intervention, science, and HIV, to come to the community advisory board meetings on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the LGBT Community Center. They are putting together a class on medical literacy, which includes leading-edge science. Their doctors were co-chairs of the AIDS conference.

On October 4, the California Assembly's Select Committee on Homelessness, Tom Ammiano and Toni Atkins will hold a hearing on housing, social, legal and health care barriers for homeless youth, LGBT youth and transitioning foster youth.

Horizons Foundation will have their Gala on October 6.

Commissioner Pappas announced that he was reappointed to serve on the Commission.

12. **Old/New Business**

None.

13. **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:36.