Problem Statement

- Approximately 5% of American high school students (roughly 3/4 of a million students) identify as lesbian or gay.
- 84.6% of LBGTQ students report having been harassed at school in the last year.
- 63.7% of LBGTQ students reported being verbally harassed and 27.2% reported being physically harassed at school in the past year.
- LBGTQ Youth are four times more likely to commit suicide than their peers.

Librarians can reduce the feelings of isolation LBGTQ teens experience by providing access to resources that provide positive, accurate images of the LBGTQ community.

Findings

There are no significant trends among school districts or regions of the state. Selection of LBGTQ YA novels seems to be guided by individual librarian opinions.

- North Carolina high school libraries held an average of 3.54 of the titles.
- 19.33% of the schools held NONE of the titles.
- Most schools (65.33%) held fewer than five of the titles.
- Only 5.33% of the schools held more than ten of the titles.
- No school held all 15 of the titles.

Purpose of the Study

To determine the extent to which a recommended core collection of 15 LBGTQ young adult novels are represented in a sample of 150 North Carolina high school libraries.

Titles

- Annie on My Mind
- Boy Meets Boy
- Luna
- Empress of the World
- Rainbow Boys
- Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence
- The Perks of Being a Wallflower
- My Heartbeat
- The Misfits
- Hard Love
- Down to the Bone
- Vast Fields of Ordinary
- Geography Club
- Freak Show
- Parrotfish

Implications

School librarians in North Carolina should be collecting more LBGTQ YA fiction, particularly novels that:

- Portray the LBGTQ community positively and accurately.
- Feature LBGTQ characters who lead successful lives.
- Do not suggest that being an LBGTQ teen is only something to overcome. (Do not collect only problem novels.)

School librarians in North Carolina should examine their collection development practices to ensure that they are not engaging in self-censorship.

Professional organizations in North Carolina should assist school librarians in serving their LBGTQ students by addressing the needs of these students at conferences and in publications.

School librarians in North Carolina need to promote the school library as a safe place for LBGTQ teens and their allies and to help establish a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) or other LBGTQ organization at their school.