

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MINORITY STUDENTS TO MARCH FOR SAFER SCHOOLS STATE-WIDE

October 10, 2005

On Saturday, October 22, students from across North Carolina will hold a march and rally in Raleigh advocating for statewide school policies that explicitly include and protect lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/questioning and other minority students and faculty. The rally is being organized by the Triangle Gay-Straight Alliance Network (TGSAN) and will begin at 12 noon at the Crime Victims Memorial Garden on the corner of Lane and Wilmington. A march to the capitol, speakers, and music will follow.

The rally is being held in hopes that specifically mentioning LGBTQ students and faculty in school policies will be more effective in preventing verbal and physical harassment based on real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. Currently there are only five school systems in North Carolina that specifically mention sexual orientation in policies regarding harassment, and not one system includes gender identity. As of now, harassment of LGBTQ students and teachers is widely overlooked by school officials, partly because there is no statewide policy compelling schools to acknowledge, condemn, or prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation/gender identity. TGSAN, which works to connect and strengthen Gay-Straight Alliances in area schools, believes that the petition for change is necessary for creating a school environment where discrimination of any kind is unacceptable and LGBTQ students, faculty, and allies can be truly safe.

More information regarding directions, parking, or the goal of the rally can be found at [www.tgsan.org](http://www.tgsan.org).