

# New data shows US LGBTQ+ students twice as likely to drop out of High School, costing economy more than \$30 billion

*Researchers project more than one in every 10 LGBTQ+ students in the USA will drop out of education – with widespread bullying blamed.*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, June 26, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Alarming new data shows US LGBTQ+ students twice as likely to drop out of High School, costing economy more than \$30 billion

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*Justin van Fleet PhD, President of Theirworld*

- Justin van Fleet, PhD, President of Theirworld, led a team of researchers to analyze figures for 38 OECD member countries
- More than one in every 10 LGBTQ+ students in the U.S. are projected to drop out of education
- As many as 650,000 LGBTQ+ youth in the U.S. currently aged 12-17 may not complete their education

- Widespread bullying and discrimination in schools blamed, with more than half of LGBTQ+ youth reporting they've faced hostility in educational settings
- The study predicts long-term economic cost of more than \$30 billion for each cohort dropping out of school

LGBTQ+ students in the United States are dropping out of education at a rate of more than twice the national average.

The alarming new international study by the global children's charity Theirworld suggests more than one in every 10 (11.6%) LGBTQ+ students in the U.S. do not complete high school, compared to 5.7% across the country's education system.

The findings come from a team led by Justin van Fleet, PhD, President of Theirworld, and included Harvard's Shelby Carvalho and Brown University's Patrick Shaw.

The team applied data modelling on OECD and official government statistics across all 38 OECD member countries to estimate drop-out rates among LGBTQ+ students.

The projections show a drop-out rate of between 8.3% and 14% for LGBTQ+ high school students in the U.S., with a midpoint of 11.6%.

The national figure is higher than the nation's most comparable neighbor, Canada, which has a projected drop-out rate of 9.9%.

The projection suggests more than 650,000 LGBTQ+ students currently aged 12-17 in the U.S. are at risk of not completing High School.

Researchers predict long-term economic consequences running into the billions, projecting each graduating class of LGBTQ+ students who leave school early costs the US economy up to \$706 million.

Over a working lifetime, this equates to more than \$30 billion for each cohort of students not graduating high school.

In some countries, including Mexico, Costa Rica, Turkey, Brazil, Spain, and Argentina, more than half of LGBTQ+ students are projected to leave school early if trends in the modelled countries hold true.

The startling figures build on earlier research, which revealed widespread bullying and discrimination in schools towards LGBTQ+ students in US High Schools.

In fact, more than half (52%) of the nation's LGBTQ+ youth say they have faced hostility in educational settings, with 13% saying they were bullied by teachers or school administrators.

More than a third (38%) do not think US schools are safe environments for LGBTQ+ students.

Justin van Fleet PhD, President of global children's charity Theirworld, said: "Historically, it has been difficult to pinpoint drop-out rates among LGBTQ+ students, so this data is likely to come as a shock to many.

"To see that so many LGBTQ+ students may not make it through the education system is incredibly alarming.

"It's astonishing that young people identifying as LGBTQ+ are finding schools to be places of discrimination instead of tolerance, understanding, and safety.

"When we fail to nurture all young people, we face not only a moral dilemma, but serious economic consequences."

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