

The Mathematics of Homophobic Bullying

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Bullying Highlights

Sexual Minority Youth May Experience Different Educational Outcomes From Their Peers

- Grade point averages half a grade lower than students less often harassed
- More likely to report they did not plan to pursue post-secondary education

(The 2009 National School Climate Survey, GLSEN)

- Lower levels of school belongingness, where bisexual & questioning students' levels of school belongingness were significantly lower

(Robinson & Espelage, 2011)

Sexual Minority Youth May Experience Unsafe School Environments Because of their Sexual Orientation

(The 2009 National School Climate Survey, 2009)

- 90% heard "gay" used negatively
- 72% heard other homophobic remarks freq or often
- 85% verbally harassed
- 40% physically harassed
- 19% physically assaulted
- 62% did not report the incident for fear of retaliation
- 34% who did report said school staff did nothing

Sexual Minority Youth May Respond to Unsafe School Environments by Skipping School

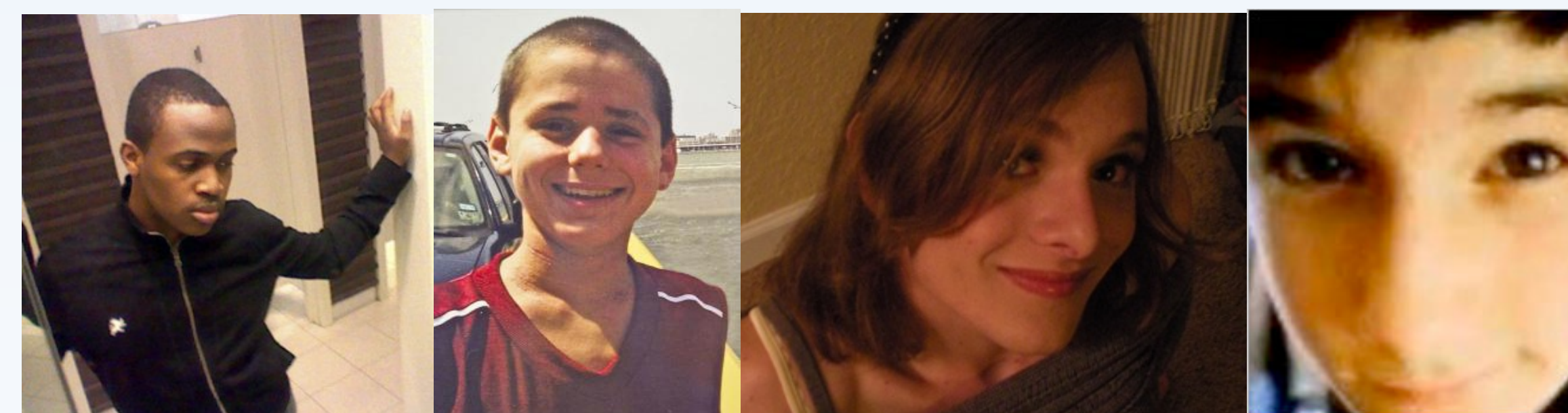
In the month before the survey:

- 10% missed at least one day of school
 - 30% missed more than one day of school
- (The 2009 National School Climate Survey, GLSEN)
- 16% middle school & 13% high school students missed 1 to 2 days of school
 - 6% middle school & 8% high school students missed 3 days or more of school

(Robinson & Espelage, 2011)

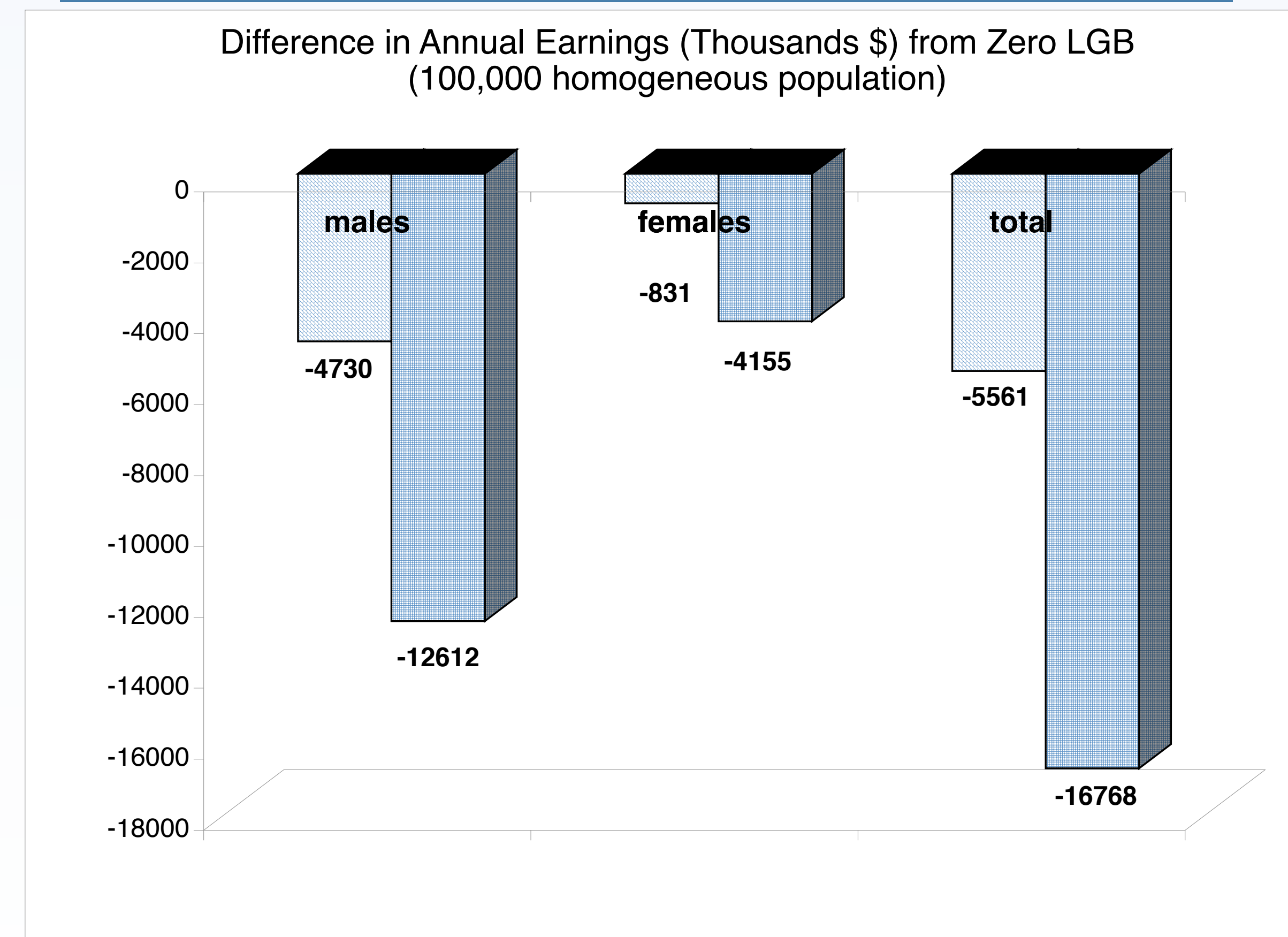
Introduction

Between July and December 2010, ten young men and one young woman (Badash, 2011ab; Birkey, 2010; Goff, 2010; Heywood, 2010; Knittle, 2010; Melloy, 2010; Najafi, 2010) were reported by the popular media to have committed suicide as a result of bullying within their school environments, related to their actual or perceived sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. Bullying costs schools, classroom teachers, students, and families in terms of time, energy, and learning opportunities (Hatzenbuehler, 2011; Himmelstein & Bruckner, 2011), as well as financial costs, related to lost lifetime income due to lower educational achievement (Day & Newberger, 2002; Julian & Kominski, 2011), long-term mental health issues (Maza & Krehely, 2010; Meyer, 2003; Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, Card & Russell, 2010), and homelessness (Ray, 2006). Evidence also suggests that sexual minority youth (students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, two-spirit, or questioning) are at a much higher risk for experiencing criminal-justice and school sanctions (Himmelstein & Bruckner, 2011).



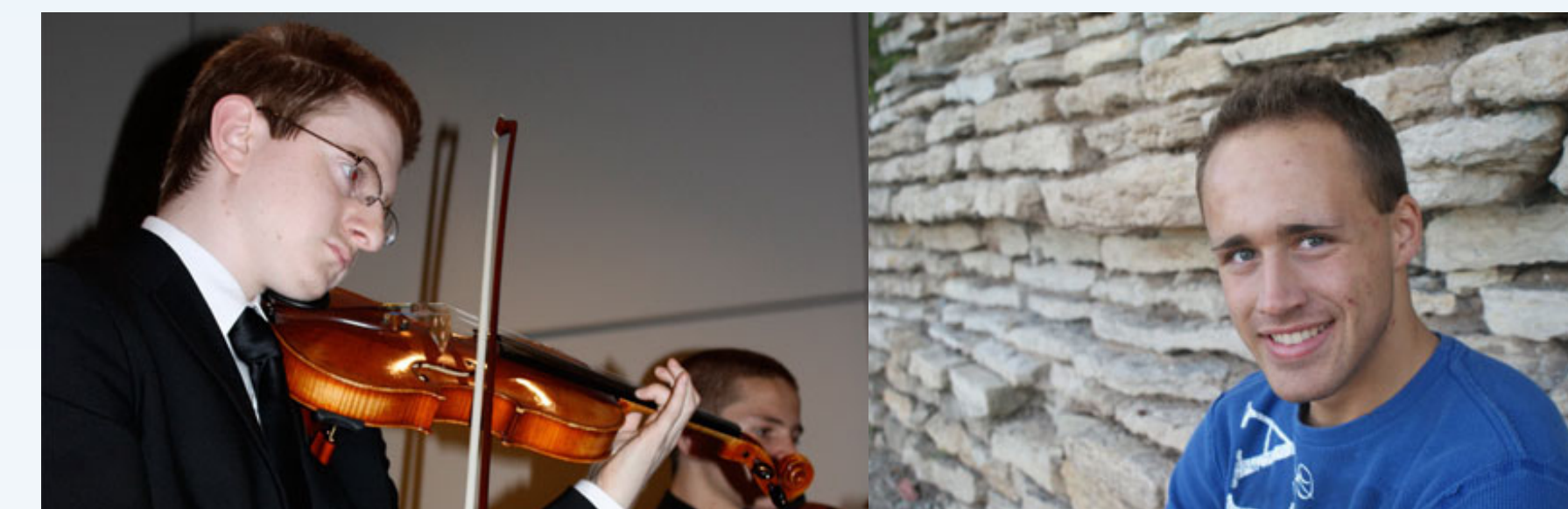
September 2010 suicides by gay (transsexual) youth: Raymong Chase, Monticello, NY, 19; Asher Brown, Cypress-Fairbanks, TX, 13; Billy Lucas, Greensburg, IN, 15 (not shown); Justin "Chloe" Lacey, Eureka, CA, 18; Seth Walsh, Bakerfield, CA, 13; Tyler Clementi, Rutgers, NY, 18; Cody Barker, Appleton, WI, 17; in July, October, and November 2010 there were 4 (one female).

Difference from Zero-LGB Assumption



Lower Lifetime Earnings

When sexual minority youth opt out of post-secondary education, their lifetime earnings' potential decreases. Based upon earnings of 25-64 year olds (Day & Newberger, 2002; Julian & Kominski, 2011) and a constructed community of 100,000 population, annual earnings were compared based upon three assumptions: zero or no-LGB, low-LGB (3% gay/bisexual men; 1% lesbian/bisexual women) and high-LGB (8% gay/bisexual men; 5% lesbian/bisexual women) (estimated from the National Survey of Sexual Health Behavior, 2010). From Project Stride (Meyer, n.d.) it was estimated that 20.2% of gay/bisexual men and 16.8% of lesbian/bisexual women would have less than or only a high school diploma.



All Educational Categories

25-64 year old earnings/year estimated to be:
(reported in thousands of dollars)

	low LGB estimate		
	males	females	total
h.s. dropout	165416	166175	331590
h.s. graduate	472847	490277	963124
some college	601376	623543	1224919
bachelor's	526244	545642	1071886
master's	253572	262918	516490
other	144271	149589	293861
Total Annual Earnings	2163726	2238143	4401869
	high LGB estimate		
	males	females	total
h.s. dropout	174403	169965	344368
h.s. graduate	468855	488593	957449
some college	596299	621402	1217701
bachelor's	521802	543768	1065570
master's	251431	262016	513446
other	143053	149076	292129
Total Annual Earnings	2155843	2234819	4390662
	zero LGB assumption		
	males	females	total
h.s. dropout	160023	165227	325250
h.s. graduate	475242	490698	965940
some college	604422	624078	1228500
bachelor's	528910	546110	1075020
master's	254856	263144	518000
other	145002	149718	294720
Total Annual Earnings	2168456	2238974	4407430

Implications

In this brief study of the mathematics of homophobic bullying, the costs to *individual* students in terms of missed days of school, lower educational attainment, and lower educational aspirations are translated into the loss of annual earnings for a 100,000 member community. Whether the community is homogenous racially or whether it is racially heterogeneous (White, Black, and Latino/a; refer to supplemental handout), there appear to be *community* costs when sexual minority youth are victimized in school environments. In addition to analyzing annual earnings, we need to be able to calculate the costs of homelessness and poorer psychological well-being (with related healthcare costs) to characterize *societal* costs when harassment of sexual minority youth is not stopped in school environments.

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