



PSEC 2011 Year-End Report

-2011-

PSEC Established April 2011

PA Youth Unite as PSEC

The Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition is the Keystone State's first and only statewide LGBTQ youth organization.

PSEC works as an entirely youth-led and youth-run coalition dedicated to advocacy across the commonwealth relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth and safe schools.

PSEC was founded in April 2011 by leaders of LGBTQ student youth organizations from across Pennsylvania.

As an independent coalition of LGBTQ youth communities in Pennsylvania, PSEC represents thousands of LGBTQ young people throughout the Keystone State.

PSEC is the first entirely youth-led statewide LGBTQ organization in the nation.

PSEC YEAR-END REPORT

This report highlights the work of Pennsylvania LGBTQ youth throughout the commonwealth working for the first year as PSEC.

PSEC youth had networked together since January 2010 and were finally able to achieve their united goal of forming a sovereign organization in 2011. PSEC is officially a non-profit organization operating in Pennsylvania with sponsorship for 501(c)3 tax-exempt status.

PSEC's leadership is significantly composed of rural youth, youth of color and transgender/gender variant youth.

PSEC currently has three field offices - in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia. The coalition has grown to be based with over 70 LGBTQ youth organizations throughout Pennsylvania.



PSEC Holds Constitutional Convention in Harrisburg

Over 30 leaders of LGBTQ student organizations from across Pennsylvania convened in August 2011 in Harrisburg to draft and adopt the PSEC Constitution.

Page #3



PSEC Youth Action Conference Rallies Students in Philadelphia

More than 100 LGBTQ youth leaders from all across Pennsylvania gathered in Philadelphia for a weekend of expert trainings and policy briefings with local, state, and national social justice leaders.

Page #3

The Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition's Statement of Purpose:

The Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition (PSEC) is a statewide social justice mobilization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and allied youth in Pennsylvania. As an organized voice of the Pennsylvania LGBTQ youth movement our affiliation is open to youth-led LGBTQ organizations in Pennsylvania. PSEC provides resources and support to LGBTQ youth in local communities and in educational institutions. PSEC works for social support and coordinated campus-community organizing for LGBTQ equality in Pennsylvania. As part of a broader social justice movement, PSEC works for Pennsylvania to be a commonwealth that respects the diversity of human expression and identity which provides opportunity for all. The primary focus of PSEC is on local, state and national safe schools legislation and policies.

PSEC 2011 Highlights

PSEC had an extraordinarily active year. Below are selected highlights of PSEC's work in 2011:



PSEC state leaders on the steps of the Pittsburgh City-County Building – 12/2011

- April 28, 2011 – Established as an incorporated non-profit organization in Pennsylvania.
- April 30, 2011 – Participated in Equality Forum in Philadelphia. PSEC brought over 100 youth from across Pennsylvania to participate in the weekend and attend the International Equality Dinner, participated on three panels and workshops.
- May 18-19, 2011 – Sent statewide governing board to Washington, DC to meet with Mara Keisling and the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), staff of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), and the policy department of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and to lobby congress on SSIA/SNDA.
- June-August 2011 – Participated in all eight pride celebrations in Pennsylvania. Dozens of PSEC organizing meetings take place throughout the state.
- June 28, 2011 – PSEC Executive Director invited by the White House to President Obama's 3rd Annual LGBT Pride Month Celebration as one of five college youth in the nation.
- July 2011 – Sent letters to approximately 75 advisors of college and university LGBTQ student organization about supporting LGBTQ History Month in the fall in partnership with Equality Forum.
- August 5-7, 2011 – Held the PSEC Constitutional Convention in Harrisburg. Attended by over 30 Presidents and leaders of LGBTQ student organizations.
- August 2011 – The Harrisburg office of every Pennsylvania state legislator was visited by PSEC staff in support of the welfare of LGBTQ youth.
- September 20, 2011 – Individual letters sent to each United States Representative and Senator from Pennsylvania in regards to the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell – in support of full LGBTQ equality in the military with further reforms in military employment (non-discrimination statement, transgender equality).
- September – December, 2011 – LGBTQ Youth Town Hall meetings were held throughout the state. Collaborated with PSEC Partners throughout Pennsylvania.
- October 16-18, 2011 – PSEC Youth Action Conference was held with over 100 students from across the state at the University of Pennsylvania.
- October-November, 2011 – Pennsylvania Night to Live: Vigils held at campuses across the state in remembrance of LGBTQ youth, and those youth perceived to be LGBTQ, who have completed suicide.
- November 3, 2011 – The Keystone Student Voice launched as the first Pennsylvania LGBTQ Student Newsletter.
- November 8, 2011- The PSEC Philadelphia Office moved from University City to the William Way Community Center.
- November 9, 2011 – PSEC accepted to support two workshops at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change Conference 2012 in Baltimore, MD.
- November 15, 2011 – PSEC staff visited the office of every US Representative and Senator from Pennsylvania in Washington, DC, on safe schools. PSEC staff attended the National Center for Transgender Equality's 8th Year Anniversary Event.
- November 16, 2011 – PSEC staff represented Pennsylvania at the National Safe Schools Roundtable in Nashville, TN.

PSEC 2011 Highlights (Continued)

- November 20, 2011 – PSEC leaders across the state participated in events for the International Transgender Day of Remembrance. Over 40 students attended the vigil on the Capitol Steps. Following, PSEC hosted a Central PA Trans Youth meeting in Harrisburg.
- November 21, 2011 – Petition started to support PSEC and Safe Schools legislation in Pennsylvania.
- December 1, 2011 – PSEC delivers testimony at the Philadelphia City Council vote on an equal benefits bill in city contracting. PSEC leaders help lead World AIDS Day events in Pittsburgh and throughout Pennsylvania.
- December 2, 2011 – PSEC Delaware Valley regional social held at Bryn Mawr College.
- December 7, 2011 – PSEC facilitated a PRYSM youth group meeting in Media, PA.
- December 9, 2011 – The Attic Youth Center agrees to be PSEC's fiscal sponsor while PSEC's 501c3 tax exemption application is processed with the IRS.
- December 19-20, 2011 – PSEC Winter State Committee Retreat in Pittsburgh, PA.
- January 13-15, 2012 – PSEC Coordinating Committee Winter Convening in State College, PA.

PSEC'S NEWSROOM

PSEC regularly posts about LGBTQ and youth issues in Pennsylvania online. Please check out [PSEC's website](#) for more information and follow [PSEC on Facebook!](#)

PSEC's Newsroom:

www.pennsec.org/news-room-home/

PSEC Constitutional Convention – August 2011

Harrisburg, PA- PSEC held a constitutional convention in Harrisburg over the first weekend in August. Over 30 Presidents and leaders of LGBTQ student organizations met for two days to draft and adopt the founding document of the coalition.

The leaders chose to model PSEC after the main student organization of the civil rights movement, The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), as well as the National Woman's Party (NWP). The leaders studied the successes and challenges of youth driven social justice advocacy models in partner movements in order to adopt a structure which would work best in Pennsylvania.

The PSEC Constitution was adopted on August 7, 2011 and provides for the formation of the PSEC Coordinating Committee and PSEC State Committee across eight regions in Pennsylvania. Every local LGBTQ youth organization which affiliates itself with PSEC has one delegate and one vote in the organization – retaining a grounded group centered leadership structure. To support the Coordinating Committee each region elects a State Committee member to represent their region on the statewide board. The Coordinating Committee has the ultimate power behind the organization – meeting biweekly on statewide conference calls throughout the year as well as meeting in-person regionally for local actions.



PSEC leaders on the steps of the Pennsylvania Capitol Building – 8/2011.

PSEC Youth Action Conference – October 2011

Philadelphia, PA- PSEC held its first statewide conference October 14-16, 2011 at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Over 100 student leaders from dozens of schools throughout Pennsylvania gathered for what was the largest organizing meeting of LGBTQ youth leaders in the state ever held.

PSEC YAC speakers included:

Mara Keisling - Executive Director, The National Center for Transgender Equality
 Alison Gil - Public Policy Manager, GLSEN
 Chris Bartlett - Executive Director, The William Way Community Center
 Tammy Simpson - Mother of Brandon Bitner
 J. Mason – Training Coordinator, The Attic Youth Center
 Tommy Atz – Coordinator of Community Outreach, Safeguards
 Sherrie Cohen – LGBTQ Activist in Philadelphia
 Mark Segal – Publisher, The Philadelphia Gay News

The PSEC YAC was run as a convening with expert trainings, policy briefings, and strategic development sessions for the coalition.

Caucuses were held on a variety of topics – including community organizing, white privilege, and educational advocacy.



PSEC leaders with Mara Keisling at the PSEC YAC – 10/2011.



@ Equality Forum 2011



TAKING IT TO THE CAPITOL!



PSEC in Washington, DC

Just over two weeks after PSEC was founded, the State Committee ventured to Washington, DC. Each State Committee member visited the office of their US Representative in support of SNDA and SSIA. (US Capitol) - 5/2011.

PSEC Leadership Rotation in HBG



PSEC leaders from the Coordinating Committee participate in advocacy rotations in Harrisburg. Here, PSEC State Committee member Connor Hesketh of Philadelphia after a legislator meeting in the Ryan Building (Pennsylvania State Capitol) -12/2011.

FAST FACTS

85%

Of LGBTQ students in PA have been verbal harassed because of their sexual orientation. 31% of LGBTQ students report being harassed because of their gender identity. (GLSEN – 2009)

52%

Of LGBTQ students who were harassed or assaulted in school never reported it to school staff. Of those who did only 34% said that reporting the bullying resulted in effective intervention by staff. (GLSEN – 2009)
*GLSEN National School Climate Survey (2009)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See PSEC’s LGBTQ Youth Reports Website

WWW.PENNSEC.ORG/LOCAL-RESOURCES/LGBTQ-YOUTH-REPORTS/



PSEC State Leadership after a visit with US Senator Bob Casey’s DC office about the Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA) – 5/2011.

To Harrisburg and Washington, DC

As the organized LGBTQ youth voice in Pennsylvania, PSEC is regularly advocating for the welfare of LGBTQ youth in the Pennsylvania and United States legislatures.

PSEC leadership works several days a week in Harrisburg and in communities across the state empowering youth leaders to engage with their elected legislators and government officials.

While PSEC is primarily focused on issues within the Pennsylvania legislature, PSEC leadership makes trips to Washington, DC approximately every 3 weeks for advocacy efforts and to meet with national organizations.

In 2011, PSEC leaders visited the offices of every single Pennsylvania and United States Representative and Senator multiple times in their respective capitols to support safe schools legislation.

PSEC staff has submitted testimony to a Pennsylvania House Committee and to the Philadelphia City Council.

As a non-partisan organization PSEC focuses on authentic community empowerment and social justice advocacy as local efforts. PSEC is based in the power of youth to be effective advocates on their own issues.

Youth are frequently missing at the decision making tables and PSEC’s model is to power a generation of impact to be leaders in Harrisburg, Washington, and our local communities.

The Issue: Safe Schools in Pennsylvania

Studies have shown that many schools in Pennsylvania (K-12) may be not safe environments for students who identify as LGBTQ. According to the Gay, Straight and Lesbian Education Network’s (GLSEN) 2007 National School Climate Study:

“Pennsylvania schools were not a safe place for many LGBT secondary school students. Biased language, especially homophobic language and negative remarks about gender expression, was very common in Pennsylvania schools. Students reported hearing biased remarks from not only their peers, but from school personnel as well. LGBT students also faced harassment in school, both verbal and physical in nature, with sexual orientation and gender expression being the characteristics more commonly targeted. These experiences led many students to miss classes and entire days of school because they felt unsafe, and LGBT students experience high levels of harassment were particularly at risk of absenteeism due to safety concerns. Furthermore, students who were frequently harassed reported lower grade point averages than other students, suggesting that a negative school climate may hinder students’ ability to succeed academically. Unfortunately, incidents of harassment and assault often went unreported to school authorities and students’ families.”

Students should not experience harassment, assault or bullying in any school community for being who they are.

Youth Launch Petition to Support PSEC and Safe Schools Legislation



PSEC leaders at Erie Pride – 8/2011.

Harrisburg, PA- The PSEC State Committee unanimously voted to launch a petition to support PSEC and Safe Schools legislation in November 2011. The petition states support for PSEC as Pennsylvania's LGBTQ youth organization and for the focus of PSEC's work: the passage of safe schools legislation to protect LGBTQ and all youth in school.

Pennsylvania and national LGBTQ community leadership continue to be incredibly supportive of PSEC's establishment and PSEC's mission of improving the welfare of LGBTQ youth in Pennsylvania. This growing petition is a testament to the support of authentic LGBTQ youth power in Pennsylvania.

PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION

You can sign the online petition by clicking on the link below. Thank you!

<http://www.change.org/petitions/pennsylvania-support-psec-and-safe-schools-legislation>

"We, the undersigned, believe all Pennsylvania youth should be able to learn in their schools and engage with their communities free of discrimination or bullying on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression..."

... We believe in the power of love to triumph all challenges. Through our support of PSEC, we ground ourselves in recognizing the power of young people to define their own tools to work towards a Pennsylvania and nation that provide opportunities for all."

Core Signatories (as of 12/31/2011):

The PSEC Coordinating Committee (25 LGBTQ Student Youth Organizations)

Carrie Jacobs - Director, The Attic Youth Center

Lynn Zeitlin - Former Executive Director, Equality Pennsylvania

Robin McGeehe - Director, GetEQUAL

Shane Windmeyer - Director, Campus Pride

Robin McHaelen - Director, True Colors

Joe Wilson - Director/Producer, Out in the Silence

Susan Smith - Chairperson, NEPA Rainbow Alliance

Bill Browne - Member of the Board of Directors, NEPA Rainbow Alliance

Malcolm Lazin - Director, Equality Forum

Emmett Patterson - GLSEN 2011 Advocate of the Year

Michael Mahler - Publisher, The Erie Gay News

Thomas Waters - Member of the Board of Directors, The Delta Foundation of Pittsburgh

Betty Hill - Executive Director, The PERSAD Center

Corey Bernstein - LGBTQ Youth Activist

Audrey Smith - Founder, Justice League Activate! - State College, PA

Mark Segal - Publisher, The Philadelphia Gay News

The Attic Youth Center (Philadelphia, PA)

Equality Forum (Philadelphia, PA)

The Delta Foundation of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)

PSEC State Leadership Retreat in Pittsburgh

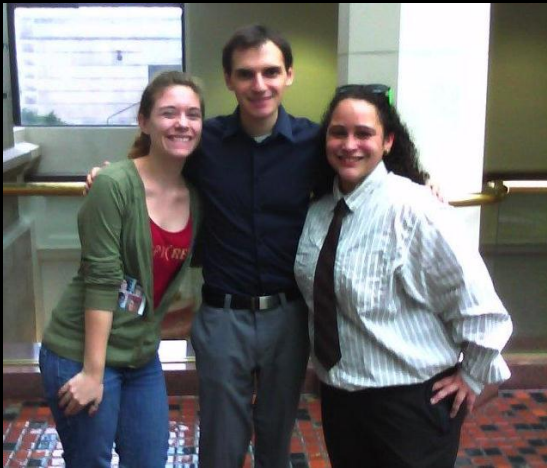
Pittsburgh, PA- PSEC state leadership met in Pittsburgh on December 20, 2011 for a day-long retreat. This was the first official quarterly retreat with the PSEC regional leaders for strategic development and trainings.

The State Committee was based in Pittsburgh's Gay and Lesbian Community Center (GLCC) for the day – with several trips throughout the retreat. The PSEC leaders met with the Director of Youth Policy for the City of Pittsburgh in the City-County Building, followed by a leadership discussion with Pittsburgh Councilmember Bruce Kraus, Pittsburgh's first openly gay elected councilmember. The leaders then had a media training with Thomas Waters at the Delta Foundation of Pittsburgh and later met with GLSEN Pittsburgh about collaborative efforts.

The leaders discussed strategic coalition reforms for the rest of the day at the GLCC, and several leaders ventured for an hour to meet with Senator Pat Toomey's Southwest Regional Director about the Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA) and the Student Non-Discrimination Act (SNDA). It was an extraordinarily productive day which will help support the work to be done at the PSEC Coordinating Committee convening in January 2012 at Penn State – University Park.



PSEC State Leadership on the steps of the Pittsburgh City-County Building – 12/2011.



PSEC Coordinating Committee members in the PA Capitol – 9/2011



PSEC Pittsburgh-West and Erie-West leaders at the PSEC Constitutional Convention – 8/2011



PSEC state leaders at the Pittsburgh City Council Chamber – 12/2011



PSEC leaders at Central PA Pride – 7/2011



PSEC leaders at NEPA Pride – 8/2011

PSEC Online Resources

The PSEC website hosts dozens of resources for LGBTQ youth in Pennsylvania. From policy briefings and academic studies regarding LGBTQ youth – to legislative records and a campus news archive.

www.pennsec.org

The PSEC website is home to the only online statewide LGBTQ resource guide – listing well over 100 local LGBTQ community organizations throughout the state.

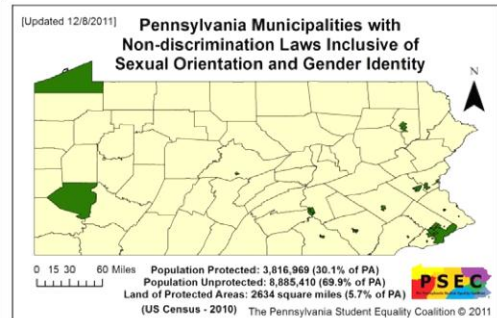
The website is regularly updated with blog posts and PSEC press releases. There is also a listing of emergency shelter options for LGBTQ youth in Pennsylvania.

The [campus news archive](#) on the PSEC website houses dozens of campus articles about LGBTQ issues.

A Pennsylvania Campus Equality Index is being uploaded in early 2011.

PSEC maintains an active [Facebook Page](#) which regularly posts relevant information.

PSEC AROUND PENNSYLVANIA



PSEC has many maps online of legislative records and LGBTQ equality laws. Here is a map of the 26 municipalities in PA with an inclusive non-discrimination law.



PSEC leaders joined TransCentral PA for the International Transgender Day of Remembrance on the Capitol Steps in Harrisburg – 11/2011.



PSEC and Attic Youth Center staff with a Masterman High School student in Philadelphia after a successful all-school assembly on LGBTQ inclusivity – 5/2011.

PSEC in the News

PSEC’s establishment and advocacy work were noted in many community and campus newspapers in 2011. Below are some articles about PSEC which are online.

Pennsylvania LGBTQ Youth Organization Founded: PSEC – Erie Gay News

May 7, 2011

<http://www.eriegaynews.com/news/article.php?recordid=201105pennsec>

PA Students Unite for Empowerment – The Philadelphia Gay News

July 22, 2011

http://www.epgn.com/pages/full_story/push?article-PA+students+unite+for+empowerment%20&id=14772579

Student establishes first youth-led statewide LGBT organization

The Daily Pennsylvanian

August 4, 2011

http://thedp.com/index.php/article/2011/08/student_establishes_first_youthled_statewide_lgbt_organization

PSEC Holds First-ever Statewide LGBTQ Youth Convention – Erie Gay News

August 10, 2011

<http://www.eriegaynews.com/news/article.php?recordid=201109pennseconference>

GLBT Activism Promotes Unity - The Temple University Daily News

September 13, 2011

<http://temple-news.com/2011/09/13/glbt-activism-promotes-unity/>

Youth to discuss challenges, solutions – The Philadelphia Gay News

October 6, 2011

http://epgn.com/view/full_story/15935374/article-Youth-to-discuss-challenges--solutions



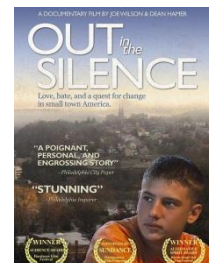
The PSEC Constitutional Convention on the cover of the Erie Gay News – 9/2011.

PSEC Coalition Partners

PSEC is proud to work with many organizations throughout the state with the shared interest of improving the lives of LGBTQ Pennsylvanians and young people. PSEC believes in meaningful partnerships with organizations working for social justice as absolutely necessary for success.

PSEC partners are LGBTQ community organizations in Pennsylvania which support the mission of PSEC, are official collaborators with PSEC, and have meaningful youth engagement in their own organizations. Please contact info@pennsec.org if your organization would like to become a PSEC Coalition Partner.

- [The Attic Youth Center](#)
- [The Delta Foundation of Pittsburgh](#)
- [The Erie Gay News](#)
- [Equality Forum](#)
- [The LGBT Center of the University of Pennsylvania](#)
- [The LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA](#)
- [The Northeastern Pennsylvania Rainbow Alliance](#)
- [The Philadelphia Gay Calendar](#)
- [Out in the Silence Campaign](#)
- [The William Way Community Center](#)



Support PSEC

Please support PSEC by getting involved and keep us powered!

PSEC is financed solely by private donations and grants. PSEC does not accept any corporate or political donations. As an all-volunteer-based organization: *all* financial support goes directly to supporting LGBTQ youth work in Pennsylvania.

Please consider a tax-deductible gift to PSEC to help power a generation of LGBTQ leaders and advocate for the welfare of Pennsylvania LGBTQ youth. Your support will allow us to reach the most needed youth communities across Pennsylvania.

Please visit our website for more information on how to support or get involved with PSEC:

<http://pennsec.org/contact-us/support-psec/>

The PSEC Coordinating Committee

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Arcadia University <u>PRIDE</u> | Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania <u>GSA</u> | Bryn Mawr College <u>Rainbow Alliance</u> | Bucknell University <u>FLAG&BT</u> | Dickinson College <u>Spectrum</u> |
| Edinboro University of Pennsylvania <u>Identity</u> | Gettysburg College <u>Allies</u> | Haverford College <u>SAGA</u> | Indiana University of Pennsylvania <u>Pride Alliance</u> | Keystone College <u>OPEN</u> |
| Kutztown University of Pennsylvania <u>Allies</u> | Lebanon Valley College <u>Freedom Rings</u> | Millersville University of Pennsylvania <u>GSA</u> | Penn State Erie <u>Trigon</u> | Penn State Harrisburg <u>Capital Alliance</u> |
| Penn State University Park <u>Rainbow Roundtable</u> | Scranton Local #1 <u>GSA</u> | Shippensburg University <u>SALE</u> | Swarthmore College <u>SQU</u> | Temple University <u>Queer Student Union</u> |
| The Art Institute of Pittsburgh <u>Pride Club</u> | The University of Pennsylvania <u>The Lambda Alliance</u> | Ursinus College <u>GSA</u> | Villanova Local #2 <u>GSA</u> | Williamsport Local #3 <u>GSA</u> |

The Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition



The Preamble to the PSEC Constitution:

"We accept the following statement of purpose, adopted at the Harrisburg Constitutional Convention on August 6, 2011, as the basis for our action:

We affirm ourselves for social justice. Through non-violence, courage displaces fear, love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regards cancels enmity. Justice for all overcomes injustice. The redemptive community supersedes systems of gross social immorality.

Love is the central motif of social justice. Love is the force by which we bind ourselves to Pennsylvania and to each other. Such love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility. It matches the capacity of hate to inflict suffering with an even more enduring capacity to absorb hate, all the while persisting in love.

By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, we affirm our work to nurture an atmosphere in which reconciliation and equality become possibilities."