

Creating “Truly Safe” Schools

Kids can't learn if they don't feel safe and secure. Period. It's that simple.

In his General Session remarks at ASHA's 84th Annual School Health Conference, **Assistant Deputy Secretary of Education Kevin Jennings** will focus on bullying and harassment as education issues that detract from a student's ability to focus on learning. He will discuss how to create truly safe schools - ones where every student feels like they belong, where every student feels secure, and where every student feels valued.

Mr. Jennings, who heads the federal Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, will share his remarks at the ASHA Conference in Kansas City, MO, October 13-16, 2010. The title of his General Session is - *Creating an Environment Where Everyone Can Learn: Addressing Bullying and Harassment in Our Schools*.



Appointed by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in July 2009, Mr. Jennings is the first career educator to hold this position and brings to this role 25 years of experience as, a teacher, a writer, and a leader in the fields of K-12 education and civil rights.

A native of Winston-Salem, N.C., he became the first member of his family to graduate from college when he received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University. He taught high school history for ten years during which he served as faculty advisor for the nation's first gay-Straight Alliance student club and also founded the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in 1990, launching his life's dedication to seeking to ensure that schools are safe places where every young person can focus on learning. In 1995 he left teaching to become GLSEN's founding Executive Director, a position he held for 14 years before stepping down in late 2008.

Mr. Jennings was named in 1997 to *Newsweek* magazine's Century Club as one of 100 people to watch in the new century. He received his master's degree in interdisciplinary studies in education in 1994 from Columbia University and earned an M.B.A. from New York University's Stern School of Business in 1999. He has authored six books, the latest of which, *Mama's Boy, Preacher's Son*, was named a Book of Honor by the American Library Association in 2006. He was also a writer and producer of the documentary *Out of the Past*, winner of the 1998 Sundance Film Festival Award for Best Documentary.

Among his many honors Mr. Jennings has received the Distinguished Service Award of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the Human & Civil Rights Award of the National Education Association, and the Diversity Leadership Award of the National Association of Independent Schools.

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