



San Diego Unified School District

OFFICE OF YOUTH ADVOCACY

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TO: All Parents and Guardians
FROM: R. Vernon Moore
SUBJECT: OUT for Safe Schools Campaign

The San Diego Unified School District is proud to be part of the National OUT for Safe Schools Campaign which has been launched to ensure that LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) students and their families feel welcomed and affirmed on our school campuses.

Unfortunately, many LGBTQ youth find their school environments to be hostile and dangerous. Nationally, LGBTQ students continue to be at greater risk of dropping out of school and experiencing depression, violence, harassment, substance use and addiction, homelessness, HIV infection, and the ultimate tragedy—suicide. (Remafedi, G., 1999) This climate can affect not only LGBTQ students' educational success, but also their psychological well-being (Kosciw et al., 2014, p48).

School personnel are critical agents for LGBTQ youth in building communities where students feel safe, secure, and accepted so they can thrive academically. Research has shown that when staff members intervene in homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression, students were more likely to feel safe and less likely to have missed school for safety reasons (Kosciw et al., 2014, p74).

San Diego Unified School District is thrilled to participate in this Campaign by providing tools to staff members that enable them to be visible resources for students and families. By wearing an **OUT for Safe Schools badge**, school site personnel have the opportunity to declare that they are safe space ambassadors and show that they are allies to all LGBTQ students.

The National Out for Safe Schools Campaign is not a policy or curriculum change. By wearing an OUT for Safe Schools badge, school site personnel have the opportunity to declare that they are safe space ambassadors and show that they are allies to all LGBTQ students. While the focus of the Campaign is on LGBTQ youth, efforts to create a welcoming and affirming environment for them will have a positive effect on the environment for *all* youth.

For further information please contact: R. Vernon Moore, Executive Director of Youth Advocacy at 619.725.5595 or rmoores@sandi.net.

Thank you for supporting our effort to make San Diego Unified School District a safe place for all students to thrive and reach their highest potential.