September 30, 2016

Dear Fremont Union High School District parents, students and community,

I am writing to provide you with information regarding our ongoing efforts to positively impact the students of FUHSD in ways that move beyond the academic curriculum they receive in class each day. One of the most critical responsibilities we have as educators is to convey to students the paramount importance of good character, respect for others, including those from varied backgrounds that may be different from our own, and the rejection of hate, harassment and bullying.

As you know, over the Labor Day weekend, FUHSD administrators were notified by a number of students and families from Fremont and Homestead high schools about anonymous threats posted to social media sites. Following the resolution of this situation by law enforcement, the district convened a community conversation at Fremont High School to listen to parents and students and begin the healing process together. Representatives from various stakeholder groups were in attendance, including local law enforcement agencies, the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley and the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center.

Many of the parents and community members that attended the meeting made concrete suggestions for ways in which our schools and district could improve its response in situations like this. One major theme throughout the evening was the desire for our schools to address the issue of hate speech directly with students. We completely agreed with this sentiment and committed to creating a plan to further address the issues of hate, harassment, bullying and good character with students, and to share this plan with the community.

Following the community conversation, we took the opportunity to reflect on the programs and activities that we currently provide to students in an effort to promote a culture of acceptance. While there is always room to further our work in this area, the work we are currently undertaking demonstrates our common values and commitment to putting forth significant effort toward building and maintaining an inclusive community. Some examples include:

- **School Culture Presentations**: Administrators deliver class presentations to all students over the first two weeks of school. These presentations include general school information, the district’s zero tolerance policy and information on harassment, hazing, academic bullying and cyberbullying.

- **Gender, Sexuality Alliance**: Our schools have held a variety of discussions and informational events around the issues of gender and sexuality. One student worked extensively with members of the California State Assembly and the State Board of Education to campaign for LGBTQ+ legislation that passed last year.

- **Digital Citizenship**: School resource officers make presentations on digital citizenship to ninth graders, which include information on issues ranging from how to deal with bullying to remaining safe online.
Some examples from our school sites include:

**Cupertino High School**
- *The Prospector* series on Race at Cupertino: The high school's student run newspaper wrote a series of articles on the subject of race at Cupertino.
- *Words of Wisdom*: CHS administrators and staff share daily character education messages with students.

**Fremont High School**
- *Common Ground*: Incoming ninth graders are invited to participate in this program, which is an extension of the Freshman Orientation, for 3.5 days the week before school starts.
- *Camp Everytown*: Members of the *Be the Change* club attend this program and then work to bring the message back to campus. *Be the Change* is a club dedicated to creating an empathetic student body who understands and appreciates the diversity at FHS. It works to develop camaraderie, cultivate understanding and improve campus morale through activities and outreach to the student body.

**Homestead High School**
- *Freshman Tutorial Pilot program*: This year, the school is piloting a program with thirty teacher volunteers who have agreed to mentor and connect with freshman students during the mandatory tutorial period to promote study skills and positive citizenship.
- *Multi-Cultural Week*: This special event is coordinated by students and designed to encourage inclusion.

**Lynbrook High School**
- *YES Program*: All ninth graders participate in a two-week curriculum during their physical education classes that promotes empathy and mindfulness.
- *Empathy Training for Teachers*: This training led by a Student Advocate and our school psychologists is planned for March 2017.

**Monta Vista High School**
- *Challenge Day*: Students are invited to participate in this one-day program to “tear down the walls of separation and inspire participants to live, study and work in an encouraging environment of acceptance, love and respect.” Students also have the opportunity to extend their growth and learning by participating in Challenge Club.
- *Link Crew*: This club gives presentations to freshmen throughout the year, with topics on building strong relationships, cooperation versus competition, making good choices, suspending judgment and building honor.

After evaluating the current status of our programming for students, we looked at next steps for strengthening and reinforcing the work that we are already doing.

In an effort to continually explore ways that we can increase inclusiveness within our school communities and ensure a safe space for all students, the FUHSD is beginning a partnership with the Anti-Defamation League. Jacqueline Regev, Director of Education, Central Pacific Region, will work with site teams at each high school to conduct a needs assessment to determine activities and trainings that
would meet the identified needs of staff and students. Trainings will likely include Becoming an Ally workshops for students and Anti-Bias workshops for teachers.

In honor of Bullying Prevention Month, staff and students at our sites are currently making plans to support the positive message of bullying prevention in a variety of ways. They are crafting messages of acceptance, respect and inclusion to share during daily announcements and participating in National Stomp out Bullying Day on October 3 and Unity Day on October 19 through student led activities.

As a district, we are deeply committed to a continuous cycle of evaluation and reflection of our programs and practices so that we can truly provide the best possible educational, social and emotional supports for every student that walks through our doors.

Should you have any questions or feedback that you would like to share with us, please do not hesitate to contact Trudy Gross, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, at Trudy.gross@fuhsd.org or (408) 522-2203.

Thank you for your support of our students and schools.

Sincerely,

Polly Bove
Superintendent