March 1, 2016

Superintendent

LCAP Committee

School District

Address 1

Address 2

*Re:* Local Control Funding Formula

Dear Superintendent XX and LCAP Committee:

Safe spaces and safe schools should not be optional. Within the last year, in San Joaquin County alone, the San Joaquin Pride Center has documented the following incidents on school campuses:

* Two 6th grade students attempted suicide on school campus because they were bullied for being LGBT.
* One student was repeatedly bullied for being transgender by their high school gym teacher
* One student was so badly teased and bullied by school janitors and hall liaisons that they quit their school and transferred to an alternative school.
* 100% of students surveyed by the Center have heard the term “gay” or “faggot” used as a slur towards an LGBT classmate

School Districts in the cities of Fairfield, Bakersfield, San Diego, Morgan Hill and just recently Manteca have all been on the losing end of lawsuits for policies or actions that prevented LGBT

inclusivity or because they failed to create/maintain a school climate that prevented bullying of LGBT students.

As a young person who identifies as LGBT or as an ally, I urge you to strengthen support for LGBT youth in schools by taking the following measures:

* **I urge you to strengthen our District’s support for our LGBTQ youth by increasing current funding for anti-bullying programs via the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)**.
* **I call on you to ensure that these prevention and support programs specifically address the challenges our LGBTQ youth face in regards to bullying and that specific measures are included so that accountability can be monitored.**
* **A new study released by the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences reports that alcohol consumption by students is greatly reduced in cities and towns where schools are more affirming to LGBT youth. I urge you to fund Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Club activity through the LCAP process or to create policies that institutionalize GSAs in all middle and high schools.**
* **Finally, I ask you maintain compliance with AB9 audits and that you provide the San Joaquin Pride Center (209-466-7572) with the name and contact for each school’s administrator appointed to handle LGBT bullying complaints or an LGBTQ liaison that can work with our local LGBT community and make sure our LGBTQ youth are receiving the support they need.**

These reasonable measures can easily be funded through our district’s LCAP under the State Priority of School Climate or by adopting a local priority. By investing in strategies like this, our district will signal that we are committed to boosting the socio-emotional well-being of all of our students, so that can perform to the best of their academic abilities.

As you know, LGBTQ youth are in need of these supports because they are among the most vulnerable of students. To emphasize this point, please review the attached statistics from a recent LGBTQ youth study. Providing safe schools that are free from harassment are vital for the success and health of all students. Thank you for making safe and supportive schools a priority.

Sincerely,

Name

School

LGBTQ Youth Study Highlights:

**Reliable estimates indicate that between 4 and 10% of the population is gay, which means in San Joaquin County, with an estimated 133,750 youth school age level, there are at least 6,687 to 13,375 gay students.**

Schools should be a young person's primary center for learning, growing, and building a foundation for success in the world. Growing up and getting through high school can be challenging for any student, but LGBT youth too often face additional obstacles of harassment, abuse, and violence. The statistics are astounding:

**Academics**

* LGBT students at schools with comprehensive policies on bullying and harassment are much more likely to report harassment to school authorities who, in turn, were more likely to respond effectively.
* LGBT students are twice as likely to say that they were not planning on completing high school or going on to college.

**Health**

* Gay teens are 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide and 5.9 times more likely to report high levels of depression compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection.
* LGBT youth who reported higher levels of family rejection during adolescence are three times more likely to use illegal drugs.

**Family & Shelter**

* Half of gay males experience a negative parental reaction when they come out and in 26% of those cases the youth was thrown out of the home.
* Studies indicate that between 25% and 50% of homeless youth are LGBT and on the streets because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
* LGBT youth are overrepresented in foster care, juvenile detention, and among homeless youth.

**Harassment & Violence**

Nearly a fifth of students are physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation and over a tenth because of their gender expression.

* About two-thirds of LGBT students reported having ever been sexually harassed (e.g., sexual remarks made, being touched inappropriately) in school in the past year.
* The average GPA for students who were frequently physically harassed because of their sexual orientation was half a grade lower than that of other students.