



San Diego Unified School District

OFFICE OF YOUTH ADVOCACY

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TO: All Principals
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 all school campuses. This program is a partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Los Angeles LGBT Center, and GSA Network.

1. WHY

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).

2. YOUR ROLE

School personnel are arguably the most 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).

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 badges can be worn *voluntarily* by administrators, coaches, counselors, teachers, cafeteria workers, clerical and security personnel who want to be known as resources to students and families.

A representative from your school site attended a presentation to obtain the OUT for Safe Schools badges. That person has specific information regarding badge distribution.

3. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Local and national resources are listed on the back of each badge. For further information please contact: R. Vernon Moore, Executive Director of Youth Advocacy at 619.725.5595 or rmoore@sandi.net.

Thank you for all that you do on behalf of creating safe and secure school communities for all of our students and staff.

OUT for Safe Schools™ is a trade/service mark of the Los Angeles LGBT Center