

September 24, 2015

Dear Berkeley High School Students and Parents/Guardians,

Our number-one priority is to ensure a safe learning environment for every student. That's why together we must work to eradicate harassment, bullying, and discrimination of any kind in our schools. As a part of that effort, we are committed to educating all students, staff, and parents about what sexual and gender-based harassment is, how we can work together to stop it, and to whom students can turn for help.

At BHS we are taking a strong stance in our communications with students and staff that harassment and bullying of any kind does not belong in our school community and will not be tolerated.

We'd like you to know about several of the most recent action steps we have taken to increase awareness about sexual harassment, in our efforts to prevent it from happening in our schools. (A more extensive list of the progress made over the last 16 months is posted on the district website.)

- Approximately 80 BUSD staff, including Safety Officers from all sites, and Before and After School staff, participated in sexual harassment prevention and response training on their first day back to work from summer break.
- All Berkeley High teachers and staff received a "sexual harassment response card" with step-by-step instructions on how to receive and respond to a report of sexual harassment from a student. Teachers and staff were also given the name of the administrator in each learning community to whom they can refer students for support in such instances.
- All BHS teachers participated in sexual harassment prevention and response training with Peace Over Violence staff on their first day back to work, August 31, 2015.
- During the Fall Semester, 9th grade students will participate in a three-hour sexual harassment workshop with several objectives:
 - Raise awareness of gender-based and sexual harassment;
 - Educate students about their recourse if they are victims of harassment; and
 - Help students recognize other forms of harassment that contribute to a hostile learning environment.
- At BHS, we are expanding the use of restorative practices to resolve conflicts in a way that promotes student concern for others while also restoring balance to communities in which harm occurs. Using Restorative Practices will help us to build a positive school culture, in which harassment gets called out and addressed, and in which students and staff are Upstanders (standing up for the rights of others), and no longer bystanders.

In addition to harassment prevention, education and outreach, we have made significant improvements to our reporting policies and procedures, which now more clearly communicate the rights and responsibilities of our students, and ensure effective and timely responses to complaints of gender-based harassment and discrimination.

- The **2015-16 Parent Student Handbook** and the school district website have been updated to reflect new information related to sexual harassment, including the creation of the Title IX Coordinator/Compliance Officer position and contact information, the new Interim Sexual Harassment Policy, and the updated Uniform Complaint Policy, procedures, and complaint form. To find out more, visit our Title IX/Sexual Harassment resources webpage: <http://www.berkeleyschools.net/TitleIX>
- We are in the final stages of hiring a Title IX Compliance Officer who will be responsible for leading our education, outreach, and harassment/discrimination prevention efforts, as well as

serving as the district administrator for receiving complaints of harassment, bullying, and discrimination.

- A new dedicated phone line (510-486-9338) provides students, staff, and parents with access to the Title IX Coordinator/Compliance Officer, and for addressing any student safety concerns.

We are creating more opportunities for students to voice their opinions and concerns, such as through surveys and class discussions. This week, all students attended a welcome assembly in which we discussed harassment of all kinds, with a focus on increasing student awareness around the harmful effects of gender-based harassment.

We appreciate the strong leadership our students have shown in raising awareness and stopping harassment, while reaching out to each other and the adults around them for support. The Sexual Harassment Advisory Committee (SHAC), made up of BHS students, current and former BHS parents, and BUSD staff, has been instrumental in working with educators, administrators, and the School Board on taking the important action steps needed to protect the safety of every student.

Please join us in these and other efforts to use education and empowerment to end harassment and bullying of any kind from happening in our schools and promote a positive learning environment in which all students can thrive. We encourage you to attend the Berkeley High School parent event scheduled for **Tuesday, October 6th** (6:30pm) during which Principal Pasarow will talk about these and other efforts to improve school climate and strengthen school spirit.

Sincerely,

Donald Evans, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Sam Pasarow
Principal, Berkeley High School