

December 15, 2016

Via BHS Etree

### Important Message on Sexual Harassment and Bullying from BHS Administration

Student safety and school climate are a high priority for BHS and BUSD leadership and staff. Recent incidents, and our continued focus on improving school culture lead us to remind staff and families of the importance of talking to our students about harassment and bullying.

As we approach the winter holiday, we hope you will be taking time to relax with your families, and also hope you will take the opportunity to check in with your students about how they are feeling, and whether they have any concerns about their social experiences at school, whether they know how to be an ally to their fellow students when difficult situations arise, what their attitudes are about sexual harassment, and whether they have someone to turn to at school to help them navigate any difficulties.

Some specific examples of sexual harassment may include but are not limited to:

- 1) Unwelcome written, verbal, physical, and/or visual contact with sexual overtones such as slurs, jokes, touching, blocking movement, sexual cartoons or drawings, and obscene language.
- 2) Continuing to express sexual interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcome.
- 3) Sexting (sending sexually explicit photos or text), or electronic postings with sexual overtones on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, Snapchat, or other media.

We want you to know that our district has [clear policies](#) on addressing sexual harassment and bullying. We also want you to know about the steps we have taken to ensure that our staff knows how to sustain a learning environment which is free of harassment and bullying.

In August, a cohort of teachers, safety officers, and counselors at both BHS and BTA were trained in the violence prevention strategies developed by Dr. Dorothy Edwards at [Green Dot etc.](#) This program's goal is to prepare organizations and communities to "implement a strategy of violence prevention that consistently and measurably reduces power-based personal violence including sexual violence and harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, child abuse, elder abuse and bullying."

In November, assemblies were held at BHS, organized by the *BHS Stop Harassing* student group, and supported by BHS staff in order to provide students with tools from *Futures Without Violence*, including these downloadable [Teen Safety Card](#), as well as [Who's Got Your Back?](#)

Next month, approximately 50 BHS students will receive *Green Dot* training, so that both students and staff members can provide strategies and supports to their peers. Our district

intends to continue its investment in these types of trainings and school culture strategies in order to create a sustainable change in school culture and climate.

Training staff and students in protocols that can reduce harassment and bullying is critical, and continuing to partner with families and the community is essential as well. We are fully committed to maintaining an environment where harassment and bullying is not tolerated, and where such behaviors are dealt with appropriately and productively when they occur.

We would like to ask families to have additional conversations with their students around these issues. Our experience and research shows that the likelihood of kids being either victims or perpetrators of harassment or bullying can be minimized if students and families are informed and empowered.

Students who would like to report an instance of harassment or bullying can speak to any administrator on campus, or any trusted teacher or other staff member who will then inform an administrator. The BHS administrative team is committed to following up on all reported cases of sexual harassment and bullying on our campus.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important matter.

Erin Schweng, BHS Executive Vice Principal, on behalf of the BHS Administrative Team