

From: ["BHS Etree" <bhs@lists.lmi.net>](mailto:bhs@lists.lmi.net)
To: bhs@lmi.net
Date: 4/30/2015 12:04:14 AM
Subject: [BHS Etree] BUSD: Letter to BHS Families from BUSD Superintendent & Board President

PLEASE do not reply to this email, contact Mark Coplan markcoplan@berkeley.net

April 28, 2015

Dear Berkeley High Community,

We are writing to update you on Berkeley Unified School District's (BUSD) continued cooperation with the investigation being conducted by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) into our policies and practices related to sexual harassment. As we have said on multiple occasions, we are committed to developing a culture in our schools that is focused on the prevention of harassment and bullying in any form. We know that we have work to do in this area, and we are committed to partnering with the student and parent advocates in the community who have so passionately and bravely shared their stories and articulated their concerns.

As you may know, we recently revised the District's sexual harassment policy for the first time in almost a decade, and we are continuing to work to improve that policy as the OCR investigation continues. We have also complied with OCR's requests for documentation, and have provided over one thousand pages of material to OCR investigators in order to better enable them to evaluate our past practices. We have also made available for OCR interviews many senior BUSD administrators, BHS administrators, counselors, safety officers and campus monitors. Those interviews are continuing over the course of three full days this week.

We believe that it is important that the OCR investigators meet with BHS students to hear their experiences directly. We have been moved by the accounts of our students, and we want to ensure that the OCR investigators hear these accounts first-hand, as well as the experiences of students who have not felt comfortable speaking up in public, or in a group setting. Thus, contrary to some reports, we have not barred OCR investigators from access to our students.

We do have concerns about student privacy and confidentiality, as well as the need to obtain parental consent before students are interviewed by federal investigators. We also want to ensure that any student interviews take place in a way that does not unduly impact instructional time, particularly at this very busy and important time of the school year for many BHS students. We have raised these concerns with OCR, and we hope and expect that they will be resolved so that the investigation can be conducted and completed in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donald Evans, Superintendent, BUSD and
Judy Appel, President, BUSD Board of Education

Mark Coplan, Public Information Officer
Berkeley Unified School District
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Marguerite Fa-Kaji and Catherine Ference are the parent-volunteer facilitators of the Etree; please direct any questions about the Etree to them at bhs-owner@lmi.net. To post a message, send to: bhs@lmi.net; BHS etree archives: <http://lists.lmi.net/pipermail/bhs/>; BHS website: <http://bhs.berkeleyschools.net/>

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