



## DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES CENTER

Educating Minds and Hearts™

April 27, 2009

Dear Board of Education and Sean Cahill,

I am writing this letter in support of all the efforts Alameda Unified School District has taken to understand and implement *Caring School Community (CSC)* and to incorporate the work of the LGBT curriculum about which you and I have been in contact.

Ironically, last week I received an editorial from a colleague on the east coast titled "Protect Kids From Bullies." The editorial referenced considerable research showing that bullying leads to over 160,000 students staying home from school each day in the United States. Also, according to the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Network (GLSEN), 85 percent of gay and lesbian students will be bullied, and 20 percent will be physically assaulted. In 80 percent of the cases GLSEN tracked, the school staff did nothing, which supports the study also recently done by National School Board's Association's Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE). The CUBE study shows that many students do not feel like there is anyone in a school building including teachers who can stop the bullying.

Given the above research, we applaud the ongoing work that Alameda Unified is implementing in trying to build a sense of community with students through the use of *Caring School Community*, which provides materials, support and guidance in the classroom, across grades, and with families and the larger school community. *CSC* components include Class Meetings, Cross-Age Buddies, Homeside, and Schoolwide activities. In addition, the community in Alameda is fortunate to have the specific lessons from the LGBT Curriculum, which gives teachers a way to talk with kids at an age-appropriate level.

Lastly, we have learned in our own research that when schools use *CSC* there are key outcomes of which many last through middle school. Some of the findings from our Six-District Study included:

- Great sense of the school as a caring community
- Stronger academic motivation
- Less use of alcohol and marijuana
- Better conflict resolution skills
- More concern for others
- Higher test scores on both reading and math standardized test

I look forward to our continued relationship and appreciate all that you and the Alameda School District are doing to be proactive to discourage divisional, and discriminatory behavior for all students. Please let us know how we can support you and the district further as they implement all the components of *CSC*.

Kind Regards,



Kelly Stuart

National Education Consultant