



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

November 17, 2016

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

California Maintains Student Protections Against Discrimination and Bullying

I know that the outcome of the recent presidential election has caused deep concern among many students and their families. The nation maintains a strong tradition for the peaceful transition of power.

I want to let all of California's 6.2 million public school students know that keeping them safe from discrimination, harassment, and bullying at our state's 11,000 public schools is a top priority. I personally know one young Hispanic girl who was told she would be deported. This is wrong, and it needs to stop.

In our great state, diversity is strength. Our students come from all kinds of backgrounds, cultures, languages, and religions, and they all come together to learn on their way to success in 21st century careers and college.

California already has—and will always maintain—strong legal and state constitutional protections against any and all kinds of discrimination, regardless of a student's race, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

I especially want to tell young women and girls that they will always be safe, be respected, and be protected at school. As the proud father of two daughters, I know that girls can achieve anything, succeed at anything they choose, and earn the respect that they deserve every day at school, in the workplace, and in our communities. California moves forward, not back.

I want to remind teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and community members about a range of resources that are available regarding school safety. They are listed at the bottom of this letter.

Thank you for the work you do every day on behalf of California's public school students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Torlakson".

Tom Torlakson

TT:ro

2016-08854

School Safety Resources

California Department of Education's Safe Schools Planning Web page, which includes annual update requirements, School Safety Plan Self-Monitoring Tool, and school safety issues and resources. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/vp/safeschlplanning.asp>

U.S. Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center: New School Year Emergency Management Planning—The Role of School Districts.
http://nida.seiservices.com/rem_s_email_blast/rem_s_ews_fall/rem_s_ews_fall.html

U.S. Department of Education's Bullying Prevention Summit video.
<https://www.c-span.org/video/?413905-101/bullying-prevention-summit-opening>

stopbullying.gov: An Overview of School Districts' Federal Obligation Against Harassment video.
<http://www.stopbullying.gov/videos/2014/02/civil-rights.html>

stopbullying.gov: Preventing Bullying at School.
<http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/at-school/index.html>

U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women: Guidance on Preventing Sexual Assault.
<https://www.justice.gov/ovw/protecting-students-sexual-assault>