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**RAMON C. CORTINES
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

October 7, 2010

RE: RECENT GAY SUICIDES

Dear LAUSD Employees, Students and Parents:

On behalf of The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) I would like to extend my condolences to the friends and families of the six young students who committed suicide. I am deeply saddened by these tragic events. These young men had been the target of anti-gay harassment and bullying in their schools. One victim, Tyler Clementi, a first year student at Rutgers College, succumbed to the humiliation of having his privacy violated and took his own life.

The LAUSD School Board and Administration are national recognized in our efforts to end bullying, antigay harassment, bias, and suicide. Since 1988, LAUSD has been committed to the respectful treatment of all members of our school community regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion and disability. Twenty years later, we are still guided by that vision.


We want all of our students to know that we are committed to providing them with an excellent education in safe and affirming schools. For those students struggling with feelings of fear, intimidation and despair, I implore you to reach out for assistance. Your principals and teachers are here to support you. The District's own support services and resources are also available to provide you with help as follows:

- Stephen Jimenez, Project 10, Educational Equity Compliance
- Judy Chiasson, Human Relations, Diversity & Equity
- Timothy Kordic, HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit
- Richard Lieberman, Youth Suicide Prevention Program
- Wayne Scott Moore, Director, School Operations

Administrators, counselors and teachers, these tragic deaths could have been prevented. It's our job to stop all forms of bullying and anti-gay harassment at every turn. If you see a student targeted with bullying, or who is isolated or depressed, reach out. The students who are most vulnerable to anti-gay bias are often the ones who do not necessarily identify as gay or lesbian. *Parents*, we are your partners and also need your help. Let's work together to help your children embrace their future.

Principals, five LGBTQ Resource packets have been sent to every secondary school. Please have your staff review the materials. In addition, please distribute this letter to your teachers, students and parent centers.

Sincerely,


Ramon Cortines, Superintendent
Los Angeles Unified School District