

EQUALITY CALIFORNIA



August 18, 2017

Fresno Unified School District Board of Trustees
Board of Education Office
2309 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

OPEN LETTER RE: Safe and Supportive School Index

Dear Trustees,

As you prepare to confirm a new superintendent of the Fresno Unified School District, Equality California (EQCA) writes to ask that you obtain a commitment from any finalist that the district will participate in the Safe and Supportive School Index, which we will send to school districts by the end of the year. EQCA brings the voices of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people and allies to institutions of power in California and across the United States, striving to create a world that is healthy, just, and fully equal for all LGBTQ people. We advance civil rights and social justice by inspiring, advocating, and mobilizing through an inclusive movement that works tirelessly on behalf of those we serve.

Our Safe and Supportive School Index is designed to measure, assess, and make public the efforts of unified school districts to implement existing laws that protect LGBTQ students, to implement programs to protect LGBTQ students from bullying and violence, and to better serve at-risk LGBTQ students.

The Index is aimed at improving the lives of LGBTQ students and school staff by giving school districts the incentive of public transparency to implement programs to improve LGBTQ cultural competency among school employees at all levels. We will publicize the results of the survey, with the hopes of having a clear assessment of where districts are and how we can work together to improve scores in the future.

The survey was developed by a statewide advisory committee made up of LGBTQ organizations who focus on school climate for LGBTQ students, teachers' unions, school districts, civil rights organizations and school board members, with the cooperation of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Given the concerns raised by the recent comments of Board President Brooke Ashjian, it is important that the board obtain a commitment from anyone hoping to head California's fourth-largest school district that it will fully participate in this survey, which will be sent to school districts throughout the state.

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eqca.org

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact us.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Zbur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rick" and the last name "Zbur" clearly legible.

Rick Zbur
Executive Director
Equality California