

As Chairs of the newly formed Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) Round Table, Henry Villareal and Sean Cahill are pleased to announce the next steps in AUSD support of Alameda LGBTQ youth and families. As advocates for a safer Alameda, and as active gay citizens of this community who have stood up for the needs of families, we are proud to report how AUSD and LGBTQ representatives are working together even more closely than before to institutionalize Alameda's anti-bullying efforts through the convening of an AUSD LGBTQ Round Table.

As many Alamedans will remember, years back AUSD and Alameda citizens participated in a community-based process to help define the need for implementation of Lesson 9. That work preceded subsequent implementation of AUSD teacher-created K-5 literature lessons and the Board's adoption of research-based Steps to Respect curricula that formalized AUSD's anti-bullying efforts to help teach our children and families about protecting and safeguarding the legal rights of all six protected classes (e.g. people who differ because of disability, religion, gender, race, nationality, or sexual orientation).

We are delighted to report AUSD has convened an LGBTQ Round Table that is meeting regularly to take Alameda anti-bullying efforts to the next level. The goal of the LGBTQ Round Table is to facilitate a process where advocates and allies of anti-bullying can plan Alameda's and AUSD's next steps toward making our city and our schools safe. The LGBTQ Round Table wants to help AUSD take anti-bullying curricula to grades 6-12, beginning with efforts to spread an award-winning Lincoln Middle School anti-bullying Wall Breakers curriculum across the island into other middle and high school settings. The LGBTQ Round Table will help work with teachers to take the next steps to adopt and pilot Steps to Respect (or other) research-based anti-bullying curriculum in AUSD's higher 6-12 grade configurations. The LGBTQ Round Table also plans to help develop appropriate questions to assess and quantify issues of homophobic bias and bullying through inclusion of new questions on AUSD's CHKS (California Healthy Kids Survey). The LGBTQ Round Table is helping AUSD monitor work to implement AB9 legislation providing an AUSD anti-bullying policy platform to every school and every family as well as enabling our students and staff with a comprehensive anti-bullying reporting system. Finally, the AUSD LGBTQ Round Table is working with AUSD to invite AUSD Board and public to celebrate, dialogue, and learn from anti-bullying events planned for this school year, culminating with Alameda's fourth annual Harvey Milk Day celebration in May of 2013.

The members of the AUSD LGBTQ Round Table team evidence a deep commitment to speaking up over time for the rights of all people, and our goal is to help facilitate and plan the work that needs to be done for all of us to understand how to really learn from and respect one another. We are able to do this important work because AUSD has built a safe place for us to convene and plan, all the while providing the necessary resources to facilitate goal setting and outcome monitoring for efforts to make Alameda a safer place. We all recognize how we play a great role that can help advance a nationally recognized need to stop bullying and promote peace, and we are grateful that AUSD is helping assert our moral responsibility to help us work together to lead us toward making Alameda a safer and more peaceful place.

The AUSD LGBTQ Round Table looks forward to the dialogue ahead about how we can achieve our common purpose as colleagues, friends, and neighbors who are coming together to get the word out about our collective responsibility to keep all people safe and our common desire to live freely and peacefully in a world without hate. Please join in the AUSD's LGBTQ Round Table work to help make Alameda a safe place for all.

Respectfully,
Sean Cahill and Henry Villareal Co-Chairs AUSD LGBTQ Round Table