

OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools, Thriving Students

March 2014

Dear Parents and Family members:

We would like to inform you of a serious community issue that threatens our students: the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). This is also known as “human trafficking” and it exists in every city across America. Community members can help reduce this form of child abuse. Most victims survive because of people who take action.

Here is some information on child sex-trafficking that helps paint the picture:

- The FBI has named the Bay Area a “high intensity child prostitution area”.
- Recruitment for trafficking and sex-exploitation has been found to occur in and around Oakland schools.
- Victims suffer the consequences of drug addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and violence.

The Alameda County DA’s Office is a leader in addressing human trafficking. In 1994, the DA’s Office launched a pilot project focusing on the sexual exploitation of minors by adult offenders. In 2005, before the passage of California’s first human trafficking law, the DA’s Office created the Human Exploitation and Trafficking (H.E.A.T.) Unit to aggressively prosecute offenders.

In 2010, the DA’s Office, in partnership with the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, expanded the human trafficking prosecution unit, to create H.E.A.T. Watch, a blueprint for a comprehensive community engagement response. From 2011 to 2013, H.E.A.T. Watch identified nearly 400 youth at-risk for or already involved in child sex trafficking. Since 2006, the DA’s Office has prosecuted 46% of all human trafficking cases in California, achieving an 85% conviction rate.

The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) launched a Sexually Exploited Minors Task Force in 2010 to address the needs of exploited students and develop education programs to prevent sexual exploitation. OUSD has since trained more than 200 counselors and school health providers to respond when a student is at-risk for sexual exploitation. OUSD Police officers have also been trained to handle and report sex trafficking cases.

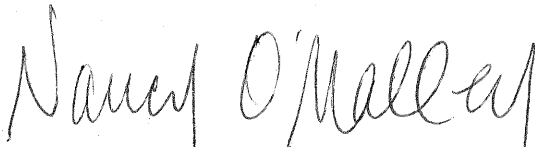
Now, Oakland is undertaking a major prevention and awareness campaign. The Alameda County DA’s H.E.A.T. Watch team and OUSD Task Force are working together to educate school staff, parents, and students about the threat of commercial sexual exploitation, and how to

identify and report suspected cases of sex trafficking. In the beginning of January 2014, we launched a billboard campaign that promoted local resources for victims, and informed the public how they can help exploited youth. Alameda County is also engaging the community and local businesses around human trafficking, as mandated by SB 1193 & Civil Code Section 52.6.

With increased awareness, anonymous reporting, and stronger penalties for offenders, more victims will be supported in their recovery, and perpetrators will be prosecuted. Prevention programs will help our students from becoming victims or perpetrators of exploitation.

We have included a parent alert about Oakland's child sex trafficking crisis and how you can help vulnerable youth. More information about human trafficking can be found at www.heat-watch.org. Let's work together to protect our children from sexual victimization and trafficking.

Very truly yours,



Nancy O'Malley
District Attorney



Antwan Wilson
Superintendent