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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact:

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Harassment & Bullying in Schools - Houston Community Forum on Safe Schools

Austin, Texas (September 16, 2009) – Every student in Texas schools deserves an education free from the harmful physical and emotional effects of harassment and bullying. However, as schools across the state are reopening for the Fall term, thousands of Texas children dread going to school to face the taunts, jeers, humiliation, physical intimidation and pain inflicted through harassment and bullying.

The Equality Texas Foundation is concerned that many school districts' current policies on bullying and harassment may be inadequate, or inadequately enforced. Although Texas' schools have worked to make safe schools a reality by putting in place bullying and harassment policies required by the Texas Education Code, we believe current statutes do not yet adequately address the prevention, intervention, and elimination of bullying and harassment from our schools.

Although well-defined and communicated policies help deal with bullying and harassment when it happens, a comprehensive program is necessary for prevention. Programs that integrate a data-tracking system for bullying and harassment incidents, a robust district-level policy that is consistently enforced, and a research-proven program to educate both students and staff about bullying and harassment have been found to be the most effective.

On Wednesday, September 23, 2009, the Equality Texas Foundation will host the second of several statewide open community forums on safe schools.

Safe Schools Forum

Wednesday, September 23, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.
Lamar High School Cafeteria
3325 Westheimer Road, Houston TX 77098

Panelists:

Sue Banner – Parent of a bullied child
Susan Shaw – Coordinator, *No Place for Hate* program of the Anti-Defamation League
Starla Reichel – Vice President of School Nurses, Houston Federation of Teachers
Laconia Nelson-Bains - School Counselor, Kashmere High School, Houston ISD

Moderator:

Rob Scamardo – Board Member, Equality Texas Foundation & Attorney/Mediator

Parents and students are encouraged to join us for this important open discussion on school safety.

This forum is presented by Equality Texas Foundation, in collaboration with the Anti-Defamation League, the Texas Civil Rights Project, HATCH, and the Texas GSA Network – a project of Out Youth. ASL interpretation will be provided for this event.

Additional Community Forums on Safe Schools are scheduled for San Antonio, El Paso, and Dallas/Fort Worth.



Equality Texas Foundation educates and engages the public about policies and their effect on Texans of all sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions.

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