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May 3, 2017

Parents, Staff and Elk Grove Unified Community Members:

The purpose of this communication is to share my thoughts, concerns and plan of action related to a series of extremely troubling actions by both Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD) employees and others associated with the District.

First and foremost, I condemn the actions taken against our students by a few trusted adults. As a father and educator, I am appalled by it. Nothing is more important than the physical and emotional safety of our students and the actions of these individuals grossly violated the trust that must exist between our EGUSD team, students and families. Even one such incident is unacceptable.

The realities related to addressing such incidents are challenging and complicated. Our first priority is always to ensure that contact between the accused and the victim is stopped and that services are coordinated to support the victim and family. Depending on how we learn of the situation, we immediately coordinate with law enforcement and support the investigation; this ensures nothing is done to compromise the investigation or impact potential legal consequences. This can be the most challenging part of the process as law enforcement understandably limits the extent and timing of information that we can share initially. The time it takes to complete an investigation varies widely. Some are completed in a few days, but most take several weeks or even months to complete. One misconception is that the District is provided with detailed information throughout the investigation. Whereas law enforcement informs us when other victims are identified so that we can provide appropriate services, the details of the investigation remain with the investigating agency. We are informed by law enforcement when an arrest is imminent. This is typically the point at which the investigating agency shares with us the actual charges against the accused. I value our cooperation with law enforcement, which ensures the guilty receive the most severe legal consequences possible. Our mutual cooperation allows us to follow through with the administrative process of terminating the employee and revoking any license or credential which allows them to work with children.

I know the explanation above is frustrating for our parents and community members. I share this frustration. Any delay or lack of specificity in providing information makes such situations even more challenging for those affected. We make every effort to provide timely and detailed information as soon as possible. We usually provide a general communication very early in the process and a more detailed one after we are made aware of the charges, recognizing that the time in between these communications can be several weeks or even months. Unfortunately, this latter communication often brings the events back to light for the victims.

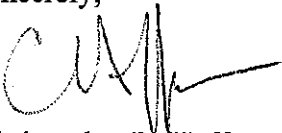
I also want to state clearly that we are thankful for the brave individuals that stepped forward to provide information that led to identification of the accused individuals. Without their courage, students might have continued to have been victimized. We work hard to create an environment where it is safe to say something when someone suspects a student is being victimized. These individuals are heroes in my mind and I am very proud of them.

One victim is one too many. With that said, please recognize that we are a learning organization of 63,000 students, nearly 10,000 permanent and substitute employees, and literally thousands of volunteers. The overwhelming majority of these people are caring, committed and conscientious individuals dedicated to the students we serve. I am proud of our people and marvel at the monumental efforts they make in meeting the needs of our students each and every day.

We have a great deal of healing ahead and work that remains. We are currently reviewing all of our policies and practices related to screening, monitoring and training. We must do a better job of eliminating such situations. Often in District communications you see the phrase "If you SEE something or KNOW something, SAY something." We must continue our efforts to provide an environment where this expectation is more than a saying, but a reality. The safety and welfare of our students depends on all of us. With the support of the Board of Trustees, I remain committed to the safety and well-being of each student and staff member in the Elk Grove Unified School District. Together, we will continue to work to improve the supports we provide.

I appreciate your taking the time to read this important communication. Thank you for your continued support of our work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHR' followed by a stylized flourish.

Christopher R. Hoffman
Superintendent