

Date

NAME

Address

Dear Program Team of the Elevate Program,

I write on behalf of [partner organization's name] in support of the LGBTQ Center OC's Elevate Restorative Justice Initiative to provide healthy and positive alternatives to zero-tolerance policies related to substance use and/or possession at Orange County schools.

Our organization strongly supports adopting restorative practices that are inclusive of and center the experiences and perspectives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) students and students of color, providing support through the means of LGBTQ student support, mental health programs, school climate interventions, violence prevention programs, substance use prevention programs, and other existing strategies designed to offer healthy alternatives to suspension and/or expulsion.

Research demonstrates LGBTQ youth are more likely to experience punitive actions and more severe forms of punishment in comparison to their heterosexual peers. Harsh school discipline places LGBTQ youth, students of color, and other marginalized students at risk for serious educational consequences, such as academic disengagement, failure, push-out, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. When related to substance use, punishment often negatively impacts LGBTQ youth from getting the support that they need towards recovery and care. Investing in the Elevate Restorative Justice Initiative using a multi-tiered system of support will help reduce health disparities and strengthen students' positive health and well-being.

[Partner organization] supports the LGBTQ Center OC's Elevate Restorative Justice Initiative to establish safe, supportive, and restorative schools for all students. We believe that the Elevate Restorative Justice Initiative will help develop a culture shift by adopting restorative and healthy approaches, which will reintegrate and uplift rather than exclude. We hope that you will formally adopt this policy at your school. If we can provide any additional information to encourage consideration of this initiative, please contact [name of primary contact] at [email address].

Sincerely,

[Name of responsible person in partnering organization]

[Title of responsible person in partnering organization]

[Name of partnering organization]

[Address of partnering organization if not in letterhead]