



NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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North Bay Security Group Introduces Social Media and Internet Use Program at NUSD

(Novato, CA) ... NUSD is taking a proactive stance against bullying and is aware of the importance of educating students about social media and internet use in regards to bullying. North Bay Security Group is working with the district to help 5th through 8th graders gain empowerment with options to respond to these issues along with assisting them on monitoring their own behavior and actions over the internet.

The California Healthy Kids Survey of Marin County in 2013-2014 found that 37% of 7th and 9th grade students, and 34% of 11th grade students reported having been bullied or harassed in the past year. Bullying can harm a student's ability to learn and concentrate, hurting their grades, along with the loss of self-esteem, self-worth, and self-confidence.

North Bay Security Group (NBSG) is currently focusing on social media, internet use and raising awareness to students about what is appropriate to share over the internet. There are many forms of bullying, such as physical, verbal and nonverbal as well as cyber bullying. It's critical that students have the ability to notice and identify acts of bullying since they can be especially effective in bullying intervention. Education Specialist Ally Hight focuses on alerting students of the potential dangers of social media. Her presentations emphasize empathy and the importance of being mindful and safe, and teaches them of the consequences that follow the misuse of technology and social media. It's a common belief among students that it's impossible to be held accountable for actions such as bullying, over the internet, but Ally informs them they will get caught and there will be consequences.

Bill Welch, owner of North Bay Security, is a retired police officer along with most of his other team members who work with NUSD on discipline support, attend Student Attendance Review Team meetings, conduct residency and welfare checks, support site safety plan development and site safety and disaster drills. Another addition to the

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team is a Marriage and Family Therapist Cristina Ascierio, who works with students that are struggling with drugs or alcohol. Collaboratively they work with the students to raise awareness of these issues and prevent these incidents from occurring. Student safety is a top priority. This fall, Mr. Welch accompanied Superintendent Hogeboom in visiting all of the schools and speaking about safety on campus.

NUSD understands that bullying prevention is a combined effort among the staff, community, parents and youth to ensure that every child feels safe and supported. NUSD also works with the Healthy Novato Initiative Partners and the Novato Blue Ribbon Coalition for Youth in these areas.

NUSD contracted with NBSG when the City of Novato lost its funding for school resource police officers in 2011. Since that time, NBSG has been a great partner in serving all students and helping to keep NUSD schools safe. For more information, please visit www.NorthBaySecurityGroup.com.

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