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24 September 2019

Dear Families of Ninth Graders at Berkeley High School:

It is with sincere enthusiasm that we present our plans for the all ninth grade SPARK (Student Power Actualized through Respect and Kinship) assembly being held on Wednesday, September 25th on campus at Berkeley High School. Working to build a positive school culture is one of the goals of our year and staff and students have been planning for weeks to bring our students this informative and empowering presentation. On this day, freshmen will proceed to the Little Theater during their Ethnic Studies/Social Living class. They will spend one hour at the theater presentation. Below is a general outline of the SPARK assembly:

- Introduction: Why are you here? Where is your power? How can we make Berkeley High a better place?
- Homophobia, Sexual Assault, and Racism--Definitions, examples, consequences, and UPstanders: Students who have made a difference and ways to empower the community
- Sexual Harassment: Affirmative Consent Law in California
- Drugs and Vaping
- Help and Support at Berkeley High
- Green Dot Bystander Training
- Where is our power? Where do we go from here?

We understand that the aforementioned issues are very important and we are committed to continuing to examine them throughout the year in our Ethnic Studies/Social Living courses.

At the beginning of the assembly we will speak clearly about trauma and the possibility that some of what we talk about might trigger a response in students who are survivors of any of the types of harm that we discuss.

Student safety is our number one priority and we ask that if you are worried or believe this assembly might trigger a traumatic response from your student, you reach out to her/his counselor ahead of time or Vice Principal Tonia Coleman.

We strongly encourage families to continue the conversation at home, asking students what they got out of the assembly and how, if at all, this has changed their perceptions of Berkeley High School. If you would like additional resources as a family, we suggest looking at [www.equalrights.org](http://www.equalrights.org) and their article on “Wins and Losses in the Fight Against Sexual Harassment” along with <http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/>, an organization who has been instrumental in this work. We also encourage everyone to familiarize themselves with California’s Affirmative Consent Laws here:

<http://affirmativeconsent.com/affirmative-consent-laws-state-by-state/>

Presentation materials will be available on the website soon after the assembly.

Moving forward, we will use the momentum from this assembly and encourage students to get more involved at Berkeley High School, stand up against any form of harassment or violence, and connect this to other events throughout the year (UNITY week, Days of Service, etc.). We look forward to this important work and thank you for your support.

With Respect and Kinship,

Tonia Coleman  
Vice Principal, Universal 9th Grade

Hasmig Minassian  
Teacher Leader, Universal 9th Grade