Castro Valley Unified School District

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May 28, 2021

Dear Sheriff Ahern,

Reference is made to your letter of May 24, 2021. The statements in your letter are not accurate. Castro Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) and Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) are both public entities that must work together as required by law, and we have continued to do that in the year since we changed our relationship with the Sheriff's Office. In our response, we will confine ourselves to the facts.

CVUSD did not terminate our relationship with the Sheriff Office. Last summer, the Board decided not to renew the School Resource Officer (SRO) contract with ACSO when it expired June 30, 2020. That action was taken by our Board on a 5-0 vote in a public meeting on June 25, 2020. Our meetings and agendas are in public as required by state law. In that action, we joined several other Bay Area school districts (e.g., San Francisco Unified, Oakland Unified, and Hayward Unified) in ending the SRO program.

As you know, our staff representatives met with your Sheriff's Office representatives to discuss the ways that we could continue to work together to support our community, and we have continued to work on a number of joint projects.

Specifically, on June 24, 2020, Sheriff's Office staff met with CVUSD staff to discuss CVUSD's interest in and commitment to continue to work with ACSO in a variety of ways, including continuing to pay for officers to work large events. The Sheriff's Office has always required payment for SROs to support school events, and CVUSD always paid ACSO at the overtime rate for officers to support sports events and other activities. This is a paid service which ACSO provides to organizations all over Alameda County. At that meeting, representatives confirmed that they would continue to provide these services for a fee.

At the meeting with your staff on June 24, 2020, CVUSD staff also discussed how we would move forward at the conclusion of the SRO contract. They specifically discussed:

- Both organizations agreed that CVUSD would continue to support the Explorer Program and its operations, including dedicated space and coordination on campus.
- Both organizations agreed that CVUSD would continue to contract with and pay for ACSO for support of large events, as we always have.
- Both organizations agreed to an additional partnership with ACSO for food distribution and other related endeavors.
- CVUSD agreed to help publicize ACSO activities for youth.

At that meeting, CVUSD staff also discussed ACSO continuing to provide core required services, including investigating child abuse and other emergency services. These are basic services that ACSO is obligated to provide regardless of a SRO contract, and the District has always collaborated on and appreciated your support.

This year, CVUSD requested support from the Sheriff's Office for our CVHS graduation on May 28, 2021 and offered the standard required payment, as has been our traditional relationship and as was agreed to again on June 24, 2020. We were greatly disappointed and surprised to receive no response at all from the Sheriff's Department. Since you did not respond to multiple emails, we have contracted for private security.

We are committed to creating a safe environment for our students that is conducive to learning. This last year has been hard for all of us, and we recognize that change can be difficult. We have made major investments in the social and emotional support for our students by educational and mental health experts and with our restorative justice and wellness programs and other engagement strategies. Our efforts in providing social emotional support for our students, our restorative justice and wellness programs, as well as our engagement strategies are invaluable.

Schools are not inherently dangerous places in which first responders are routinely required. We have highly qualified staff, trained to support the students we serve. We trust that through ACSO's experience in public safety, our community will have the proper number of first responders even without an SRO contract with CVUSD. We appreciate the support by the Sheriff's Office in emergency situations and other activities and look forward to working with you in the ways that we discussed in the June 24, 2020, meeting.

Sincerely,

Gary Howard
Board President

Dot Theodore
Board Vice-President