

**Statement on the Patrick Henry High Homecoming King
Superintendent Bill Kowba**

Good morning. I want to take this opportunity while the media is here at the Education Center to say a few words on another issue in our school district. I will not be commenting on budget proposals from Board members at this time.

As you are aware, the students at Patrick Henry had an election for homecoming king and queen last week. This is an event that is run by the students, and the homecoming court is elected by a vote of the students. They elected a lesbian couple as their king and queen.

I am disappointed that this happy and positive event has received national media coverage which has attracted a slew of what I can only describe as hate calls and emails to the school.

What is especially disappointing is that adults who have contacted the school, many of whom are not even San Diego residents, are demonstrating such a lack of tolerance and are presenting such a negative role model for children with their hateful comments. These calls and emails are also disrupting the work of the school to focus on the education of students. As you know, our district has a very strong policy against bullying of any kind; if these calls and emails were from students, they would face disciplinary measures.

This morning, I spoke with the Board member who represents the Patrick Henry area, Kevin Beiser. He joins me in supporting the students and staff at Patrick Henry. He also condemns these adult bullies, saying "Hate and bullying have no place in public education. Our schools must offer all students with a safe environment for learning and we will ignore and reject these adult bullies who preach hate and intolerance."

Finally, as an adult, as a parent, and as Superintendent of this district, I am very sad for these adults who take out their aggression on our students and school staff. I stand behind our students and school staff is supporting and congratulating the Patrick Henry Homecoming King and Queen and wish them and the school well. We will continue as a district to reject intolerance and to create safe schools where all children are welcomed and supported to succeed. I look forward to day when all students can come to school, free from harassment and bullying.

Thank you.