NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
June 16, 2016

CUSD SEES 52 PERCENT DECREASE IN REPORTED FOUNDED INCIDENTS OF BULLYING IN 2015-16 SCHOOL YEAR

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO—Last year, the CUSD Board of Trustees approved the hiring of 30 additional school counselors to support preschool through grade 12 students in a comprehensive, whole-school counseling and prevention program called Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). This school counseling program strives to provide opportunities for every student to acquire the social-emotional, academic and career skills to reach their fullest educational potential and successfully manage their lives as healthy, responsible, competent and productive citizens who respect themselves and others.

Part of the core curriculum of MTSS includes school-wide activities focused on anti-bullying and kindness. In the 2014-15 school year, CUSD experienced 109 incidents of reported founded bullying. The number was reduced to 52 this last school year.

“Bullying is not ok, ever,” stated Amy Hanacek, President of the Board of Trustees for CUSD. “We still have work to do to continue to decrease this number, but I am extremely proud of what CUSD is doing to address bullying proactively at our school sites. The implementation of MTSS has been a great support and enhancement of the parent support our district has received over the years to address bullying. Our PTAs and many individual parents and families have been committed to this work for many years and I am thankful for this partnership.”

MTSS has three levels of implementation:

**Tier 1** offers universal support to all students in CUSD schools. In addition to differentiated core curriculum and instructional practices, all student needs are assessed three times a year and individual progress is monitored.

**Tier 2** provides strategic support to students needing additional guidance. In addition to this personal care, Tier 2 pupils are also monitored more frequently.

**Tier 3** is intensive support designed to address persistent learning, behavioral, or social emotional challenges. Students in this group receive a spectrum of increased attention delivered by credentialed staff.

Informed by data from diagnostic and formative assessments, CUSD staff members meet regularly and use collaborative problem solving to increase positive outcomes for all students.
MTSS curriculum includes following directions/focusing, empathy and making friends, emotion management, and problem solving. Middle school students will receive instruction on more advanced issues like bullying and cyber safety. At the high school level, counselors will work to increase knowledge of depression and encourage students to seek help. All grade 10 students will be taught the Signs of Suicide (SOS) curriculum and will learn how to Acknowledge, Care, Tell (ACT).

“Our Board of Trustees made a huge investment in in our young people when they approved the hiring of these 30 new counselors,” stated Superintendent Kirsten Vital. “MTSS is designed to support our students throughout their education with prevention and intervention to ensure future success. This investment in the academic and social-emotional welfare of our children will create positive, lifelong impacts, which we are already beginning to see. I’m proud of this work.”

###