

1 [Pupil Peer Support Training in SFUSD]

2 **Resolution in support of the creation of the Pupil Peer to Peer Support Training**
3 **Program in San Francisco Public High Schools.**

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5 WHEREAS, California Assembly Bill 2124 in the 2021-2022 session would have
6 established the Pupil Peer Support Training Program across the State of California, and,

7 WHEREAS, California Assembly Bill 2124 was vetoed by Governor Gavin Newsom on
8 September 18th, 2022, noting funding concerns, and,

9 WHEREAS, peer to peer mental health programs have long been an integral part of
10 addressing behavioral health challenges, through the sharing of experiences amongst peers
11 to foster trust, reduce stigma, and create a safe environment for those who seek help, and,

12 WHEREAS, the Pupil Peer Support Training Program would have allowed the State
13 Superintendent to award grants to local educational agencies serving students in grades 9-12,
14 such as the San Francisco Unified School District, to create peer to peer mental health
15 programs through an application process and administration plan for grant recipients created
16 before January 31st, 2024, and,

17 WHEREAS, each recipient of the grant will ensure a school staff member who is pupil
18 personnel services certified to supervise the training of, and services provided by, pupils
19 serving as peer supports under the program, and,

20 WHEREAS, according to the American Civil Liberties Union California Action’s “State
21 of Student Wellness Report” (2020), many mental health conditions, including social anxiety,
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1 panic attacks, depressive symptoms, body image problems, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts
2 are still prevalent among students in the United States, and,

3 WHEREAS, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (Iowa College of
4 Education, 2020), survey statistics estimates that 72% of American students will face or have
5 faced at least one serious stress-inducing event, and,

6 WHEREAS, federal statistics by California State Senator Anthony Portantino's office
7 (25th District) show that in a survey report, nearly one in five California high school students
8 have considered attempting suicide, and,

9 WHEREAS, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2021) conducted by the
10 Centers for Disease Control, suicide attempts was highest among females, black students,
11 and students who identify as LGBTQ+, and,

12 WHEREAS, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2021) conducted by the
13 Centers for Disease Control, 11% of students reported sexual violence and 25% of students
14 reported bullying, and,

15 WHEREAS, according to a national survey conducted by the Springtide Research
16 Institute (2022), Black students were the least likely to report having a trusted adult at school
17 and the most likely to claim that their school mental health professional cannot understand
18 their situation due to racial or ethnic differences, and,

19 WHEREAS, according to a national survey conducted by the Springtide Research
20 Institute (2022), nearly a third of students who considered visiting a school counselor,
21 therapist, or psychologist did not do so because they didn't think their issues were important
22 enough to be heard, or that they would be judged wrongly, and,

1 WHEREAS, according to a national survey conducted by the Springtime Research
2 Institute (2022), many students are hesitant to seek help because their parents do not take
3 their concerns seriously, they would not want their parents to know they were meeting with a
4 school counselor or therapist, and/or they are concerned that school staff will treat them
5 differently or provide them with fewer opportunities at school, and,

6 WHEREAS, Governor Newsom’s \$4.4 billion one-time Children and Youth Behavioral
7 Health Initiative does not create a long term solution to address the mental health needs of
8 students, and,

9 WHEREAS, the pandemic and school closures have resulted in an increase in mental
10 health issues, but access in services has not been changed, and,

11 WHEREAS, stigma against mental health is more prevalent among marginalized
12 groups, due to cultural and religious upbringings, and,

13 WHEREAS, empowering students to provide peer to peer support will open new lines
14 of communications that could otherwise be neglected in other resources, and,

15 WHEREAS, adults alone cannot solve the mental health issues of youth. When youth
16 peers are able to share their own lived experiences, it can help develop a connection that
17 provides a level of acceptance and understanding that otherwise cannot be developed with a
18 therapist or counselor, and,

19 RESOLVED, that the 2022-2023 San Francisco Youth Commission urges the San
20 Francisco Board of Supervisors to support California Assembly Bill 2124 in the 2021-2022
21 Session of the California State Legislature for the aforementioned reasons, and,

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1 FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 2022-2023 San Francisco Youth Commission urges
2 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to petition Governor’s Gavin Newsom’s veto of this
3 bill, as we, the Commission, believe that youth mental health should be prioritized, and,

4 FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 2022-2023 San Francisco Youth Commission strongly
5 urges the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to find ways to create and promote Pupil Peer
6 to Peer Support Training Programs in San Francisco public high schools, which reflect the
7 proposed state program at the local level.

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