



Governing Board
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Superintendent
Michael Grove, Ed.D.

October 18, 2021

The Honorable Marico Sayoc
Mayor
Town of Los Gatos
110 E. Main Street
Los Gatos, CA 95030

Dear Mayor Sayoc:

As the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District settles into a new academic year, I write to you seeking partnership with the Town of Los Gatos in addressing a community issue. Specifically, the District would like your assistance in combating the issue of under-age alcohol consumption at private house parties held in the Los Gatos community.

As an educator, I am extremely concerned about this issue since teen alcohol consumption at these parties has become the epicenter for a litany of serious health and safety issues that can have serious lifelong consequences for our young people and our community. Research indicates clear links between teen alcohol use and drunk driving, sexual assault, vandalism, and other criminal acts related to impaired judgement, not to mention alcohol overdose and further drug use. The aftermath of these incidents often impact other students and play themselves out on our campuses. As a result of the prevalence and seriousness of these issues, our District has made major investments in order to provide our students with prevention education and support services.

To put this issue into context, in the most recent statewide *California Healthy Kids Survey* (Winter 2020), 11th graders were asked if they had engaged in binge drinking (5 more drinks in a row) during the last 30 days. The data indicating how many 11th grade students engaged in binge drinking breaks down as follows:

- California State Average - 12%
- Los Gatos High School - 16%
- Saratoga High School - 7%
- Mountain View Los Altos UHSD - 10%
- Palo Alto USD - 11%

As the data illustrates, the Los Gatos community clearly has a higher rate of teen binge drinking than the state average and higher than similar communities within our region. As one step to combat this, the District has invested in a curricular effort to address a series of topics intended to provide our students with the necessary information, tools, and confidence to be able to make good decisions and to push back on peer pressure. In doing so, we are also seeking to eradicate the negative issues that arise as a result of underage drinking.

By working together, through a combination of education and enforcement, I am confident we will be able to combat an issue that is causing a tremendous amount of harm to our Los Gatos High School student population and our community at large. We are thankful that the Town of Los Gatos has an existing social host ordinance in place to help address teen alcohol use. We are requesting that the Town partner with us to send a powerful message to our community regarding the seriousness of teen alcohol use and to create a stronger deterrent to hosting events with underage drinking by updating the Town's existing social host ordinance to make it the strongest in the state.

Social host laws serve two purposes*:

- 1) To create a disincentive for social hosts to furnish alcohol to individuals under age 21 due to the risk of possible criminal charge, litigation, and possible substantial monetary losses; and
- 2) To allow those injured due to illegal furnishing of alcohol to individuals under age 21 to gain compensation from the person(s) responsible for their injuries.

I thank you in advance for your time, and I look forward to further conversation around this topic.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Grove', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael Grove, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Los Gatos Town Council

**Cited from [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) "Preventing and Reducing Underage Drinking."*