**Statement of Support for the Solano Youth Voices Policy Platform**

In 2017, Solano Youth Voices (SYV), a council made up of young leaders ages 14-24 began to ask youth in Solano County which issues were most concerning to them. Youth council members collected 704 surveys, conducted 17 youth focus groups, and held 21 research meetings with issue experts to develop three recommendations. Based on this combination of youth voice, expert input, and other research, SYV recommends that the public, private, and non-profit sectors work collaboratively to create, strengthen, and promote policies which:

1. Mental Health

Expand the availability and accessibility of non-stigmatizing and culturally-competent school-based mental health services for students. To this end, some steps for consideration include:

* Safe spaces at schools where students can receive support if they are experiencing mental health challenges even if they do not have a diagnosis.
* Student groups (i.e. a student club) on each campus to educate other students about the importance of emotional health and to promote a healthy campus culture.
* A committee including youth, school staff, parents, and community leaders to identify ways of overcoming barriers to school-based mental health services.

1. Bullying Prevention

Equip and empower the school community, including staff, students, and parents to recognize, address, and prevent bullying and cyberbullying. To this end, some steps for consideration include:

* Develop a student group (i.e. a student club) on campus charged with planning for bullying prevention and awareness among their peers on campus.
* Youth and adults co-lead trainings about social emotional well-being (addressing both in-person and online/texting communication), and bullying prevention. Offer trainings to students, school staff, and parents.

1. Homeless Youth

Ensure that school campuses are safe spaces where homeless youth are treated with dignity and respect and provided with comprehensive supports.

* Homeless youth can access basic needs (i.e. food, clothes washers/dryers, hygiene supplies, and haircuts). Provide these services and supports on school campuses after school, and do not require youth to identify that they are homeless in order to receive help.
* A task force including youth, school staff, parents, and community leaders to address the logistics of keeping campuses open later so homeless students have a safe place to be and to receive services after school hours.

As a champion for the youth of Solano County, I express my support for this policy platform and my commitment to working with Solano Youth Voices and other partners within the scope of my role and agency.

Sincerely,