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November 26, 2018

Dana Kaplan
Outright Vermont
241 N. Winooski Avenue Burlington,
VT 05401

Dear Dana,

As I transition out of my role at AOE, I wanted to write and offer a special thank you for the work Outright Vermont has done and continues to do in Vermont schools and with Vermont's students. Because of Outright's long history of success with providing professional development to Vermont schools, I was correct in assuming the work we did together these past 5 years would be of the highest quality, and I was not disappointed! It's must feel great to be able to be proactive with providing professional development with schools, instead of being reactive following an anti LGBT incident at a school. This work has been critical to our efforts to ensure all students and adults in our schools feel safe and supported. If you look at the YRBS data, however, there is still a LOT of work to be done.

I was thrilled to witness the sheer number of teams in attendance at the fall GSA Conference a year ago. Outright has clearly been a huge part of creating a cultural shift in Vermont where GSAs can form in some of our smallest middle and high schools. In the initial analysis of the survey comparisons we did in 2017, we've learned that queer students who participate in GSAs and Outright events have much better health outcomes and are making healthier choices than queer youth in general. Outright has been a leader in this work. Queer young people have no idea how much things have changes in only one generation. I will never forget the young man at Leadership Day in 2016 when we shared the new "Best Practices" document. He was upset and confused because his English teacher had marked him down for using "they" as a first person singular pronoun. He had no idea that this was a very recent linguistic change!

I am continually amazed at the amount of work Outright does with such a tiny budget! I was stunned by the quality of resumes submitted for the Director of Education position which pays at least 25% less than a similar position in other cities. The dedication of your staff and volunteers speaks volumes about the important work you are doing.

Thank you very much for your ongoing care and support for Vermont's students and our schools. I hope that this work continues until it is no longer needed!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas C. Aloisi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tom Aloisi
Adolescent Health Program Manager

