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January 16, 2012

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**Westside Union School District Says No to Bullying  
Del Sur Middle School to Host “Not in Our School” Anti-Bullying Teen Summit**

Quartz Hill, Calif. - Bullying is no longer reserved for the playground or the hallway but is now a significant threat on Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and text messaging. Recognizing the dangers of bullying in whatever form it appears, one local school district has proclaimed “enough is enough” and continues to blaze new trails to stamp it out. Today Westside Union School District is calling upon the entire community to join their “Not in Our School” Anti-Bullying Teen Summit. This week of action will occur January 16 – 20 at all Westside middle schools. The week’s theme is “Respect and Connect” – a reminder that respecting one another helps the students to work better together. It is also a fitting reminder of our modern, digitally linked world where bullying has found a new home.

“Bullying stems from the fact that kids don’t understand how influential they are among their peers,” said Westside Union Superintendent Gina Rossall. “We want them to understand the impact of their words, not only face to face, but on social networking sites and text messages.”

Westside began its annual anti-bullying program in 2010 at Del Sur School when audits concluded only 62% of students felt safe on their school campus. Following the “Not in Our School” program, follow-up evaluations determined that 92% of students felt safe at school. 2012 continues this effort with programs that serve to inspire awareness and end bullying in all its forms.

The weeklong event will include daily activities such as a “Day of Silence” during which students and teachers will not talk for half the day and a “Day of Darkness” when all the lights will be off in classrooms. Rossall and Lancaster Councilwoman Sandra Johnson, will keynote the January 20 culminating event held at Del Sur Middle School beginning at 8:00 AM.

Even though the effort to stamp out bullying is a yearlong endeavor, Westside hopes that this year’s focused Summit will again help more students feel safe in their schools. “Our goal is an environment where 100% of the students feel safe. We’ve made great progress but we aren’t finished until we’ve achieved that goal,” concluded Rossall.

For more information about the Not in Our School activities, call the Westside Union School District office at (661) 722-0716.

***About Westside Union School District.***

Serving nearly 8,600 students spread across 346 square miles, Westside Union School District prides itself on being “the district of choice.” Currently there are 11 schools in the district providing world-class education to students from kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Continuing a tradition of high academic achievement, Westside Union School District was the only district in the Antelope Valley to see all of its schools exceed the coveted 800 score on the Academic Performance Index administered by the California Department of Education.