



Empowering Students to be Leaders and Make Changes in Their Environment

A joint message from County Superintendent Mary Jane Burke and Public Health Officer Dr. Matt Willis

Dear School Administrators,

Rates of youth substance use in Marin County continue to be among the highest in California. We are facing new challenges with the legalization of marijuana, the ongoing epidemic of prescription drug abuse, and historically high rates of alcohol and other drug use among our youth. In order to bring awareness to these issues and empower youth to make positive choices, the Marin County Office of Education, the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services, and the County-wide substance use prevention coalition, the [Marin Prevention Network \(MPN\)](#), are working together to bring [Dr. Matt Bellace](#) to Marin County the week of **April 23rd, 2018** for a series of presentations to students and the community.

Dr. Bellace is a clinical neuropsychologist and specializes in increasing resiliency in the face of stress. He uses stand-up comedy in his presentations and gives hands-on examples of 'natural highs.' As an author and public speaker, he shares his experiences and research at the Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord units at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, and at the National Institutes of Mental Health. His presentations have been described as "the perfect combination of stand-up comedy, interactive demonstrations and inspirational stories."

In the upcoming weeks a representative of the Marin Prevention Network will be contacting you regarding hosting a presentation with Dr. Bellace for your school. We encourage you to accept this invitation, and join other Marin County leaders seeking to protect the well-being of our youth.

Sincerely,

Mary Jane Burke, County Superintendent and Dr. Matt Willis, Marin County Public Health Officer