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For Immediate Release

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The struggle to achieve equitable outcomes for our students begins with the premise that all students have a right to be safe in their homes, communities, and schools. A4E's commitment to this premise is unequivocal, and that is why we have advocated so fiercely for the implementation of social-emotional learning, restorative practices, and robust instructional support services: these are the proven strategies that **keep our children safe**.

Eduard Sarmiento's arrest was a relief to us, as we have cooperated fully from the moment we first learned of the alleged incidents to make sure that he was held accountable. On July 12, 2022, we shared a detailed outline of events, which we share again, below, detailing the swift and appropriate actions taken by A4E:

1. June 22, 2022: A4E leadership is informed by program staff that mentees had just shared information concerning a mentor and alleged inappropriate conduct with a fellow student who was not enrolled in the Embedded Mentoring Program.
2. June 22, 2022: The mentor in question is officially terminated from the program;
3. June 22, 2022: A4E leadership informs two separate high-level WS/FCS officials;
4. June 22, 2022: A4E leadership and program staff contact WSPD and report the allegation;

Our work in the schools leading up to the subsequent termination of the program improved school climate, positively impacted the lives of the children enrolled in the program, and made those schools safer for everyone. Our success in this program was exemplary of the diligent, innovative, systems change-oriented work that has earned us the respect and support of the community, advocates and philanthropists, both locally and statewide.

The events surrounding the termination of this program were traumatic for everyone who was involved. Nearly eighteen months later, there is *still* much healing from that trauma to do, and we pray for healing for this student and their family. Our priority was and remains to respect privacy and appropriately support healing for children, families, and staff impacted by this situation, in accordance with A4E counsel. No other mentors were involved.

We look forward to a swift and just resolution of Mr. Sarmiento's case, as we continue this important work.

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