

**RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AMERICAN MUSLIM APPRECIATION AND AWARENESS MONTH,
AND DENOUNCING ISLAMOPHOBIA**

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTION No: 2324-2**

WHEREAS, the Santa Clara County Board of Education and the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools are honored to join communities throughout the state of California to recognize and celebrate August 2023 as American Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Muslims and their significant contributions are not new to America. Evidence shows that they may have preceded the 17th century, and certainly came with the early European explorers and settlers both as mapmakers and guides. Estevanico of Azamor, a Moroccan guide who landed in Florida in 1527, is often cited as the first documented Muslim in America¹; and

WHEREAS, the first significant migration of Muslims to America was during the three centuries of the slave trade where an estimated 10 to 50 percent of the ten million Africans brought here against their will were Muslims; and

WHEREAS, Muslims were referenced by America's founding fathers, and were seen as citizens with rights and obligations no different from those of other Americans. Muslim immigrants and converts have helped to build America along with countless other groups of people²; and

WHEREAS, California History–Social Science standards include lessons on analyzing the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of Islam including within World History and Geography³; and

WHEREAS, America is home to one of the most diverse Muslim populations in the world, including people of almost every ethnicity, country and school of thought. Approximately one third of the American Muslim community is African-American, one third is of South Asian descent, one quarter is of Arab descent, and the rest are from all over the world, including a growing Latino Muslim population⁴; and

WHEREAS, approximately 250,000 Muslims live in the San Francisco Bay Area and make up at least 3.5% of the population and are represented in all aspects of the community, professions, and businesses; and

WHEREAS, Santa Clara County has a thriving community with over 60,000 Muslim residents who make rich contributions to the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of our community, and foster greater respect and understanding among all people through faith and services; and

¹ <https://pluralism.org/the-first-american-muslims>

² <https://ing.org/resources/a-history-of-muslims-in-america/>

³ <https://www2.cde.ca.gov/cacs/id/web/4332>

⁴ <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/what-is-the-truth-about-american-muslims/american-muslims-in-the-united>

WHEREAS, Islamophobia is a form of legal, political, and social othering of, and discrimination against, Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, which is built on foundations of xenophobia, structural racism, and racialization⁵; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution⁶ to designate March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. The document stresses that terrorism and violent extremism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group; and

WHEREAS, a 2021 survey⁷ released by California's chapter of Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) indicates Muslim students continue to face Islamophobia at school. Nearly half (47.1 %) of all student respondents experienced bullying because of their Muslim identity. While 55.73% reported feeling unsafe, unwelcome and unsafe because of their Muslim identity, with 20% reported missing school as a result. Close to one in three female students (30.12%) who wear a hijab, reported their hijab was tugged, pulled, or offensively touched. Over a quarter of the students (29.72%) indicated a student at school made offensive comments or posts about Islam or Muslims directly to them on social media. And, nearly one in four respondents (23.50%) reported that a teacher, administrator, or other adult at their school made offensive comments about Islam or Muslims; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) is committed to its key principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The SCCOE's [Inclusion Collaborative's Ways 2 Equity Playbook](#) offers districts and schools assistance in beginning and growing their equitable and inclusive practices and environments; and

WHEREAS, the safety of students and staff is a top priority for the SCCOE and it will not tolerate nor promote hate speech or any other form of discrimination; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Santa Clara County Board of Education and the County Superintendent of Schools do hereby adopt this resolution recognizing August as American Muslim Appreciation and Awareness Month; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Santa Clara County Board of Education and the County Superintendent of Schools stand in solidarity with Muslim communities, upholding their safety and rights, and condemns any bigotry, bias, or acts of violence against them, especially acts that are predicated on religious intolerance and denounces Islamophobia and all acts of hate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Santa Clara County Board of Education and the County Superintendent of Schools are committed to countering Islamophobia with education, to meeting inaction with action, creating safe spaces for fostering understanding, and implementing policies promoting cultural competency, awareness and appreciation of Islam and Muslims.

⁵ <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/pervasiveness-islamophobia-united-states>

⁶ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/anti-islamophobia-day>

⁷ <https://static.ca.cair.com/reports/islamophobia/index.html>

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the County Board of Education at a meeting held on September 6, 2023, by the following vote:

AYES: President Chon and Trustees Berta, Di Salvo, Lari, Mah, and Rocha

NOES: none

ABSTAIN: none

ABSENT: Vice President Sreekrishnan



Victoria Chon, President
Santa Clara County Board of Education



Mary Ann Dewan, Ph.D.
County Superintendent of Schools