

**RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES**

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**RESOLUTION No. 2326-2**

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous People’s Day is nationally celebrated on the second Monday of October and the month of November is Native American Heritage Month, the Santa Clara County Board of Education is honored to recognize and celebrate local and national American Indians and the significant contributions made to grow the U.S.; and

**WHEREAS**, to further promote and deepen the lessons of Native American history, then-governor Jerry Brown signed AB 738 in 2017, which required the state’s Instructional Quality Commission to create a Native American studies class curriculum for high schools that satisfies the elective course requirements for admission to the University of California and California State Universities, and AB 2016 which created an elective high school ethnic studies course that could also include Native American history and culture; and

**WHEREAS**, as of 2020, there were over 3.5 million people who identified as solely American Indian and Alaska Native. And an additional almost 6 million identified themselves as American Indian and Alaska Native and another race group; and

**WHEREAS**, Indigenous People, in particular the Muwekma Ohlone, of the Santa Clara County valley region have had and continue to have distinct, rich cultures binding them to the Earth and all of its inhabitants; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2020 census data reported Santa Clara County’s population of almost 2 million residents with 1.2% self identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Natives; and

**WHEREAS**, the census has historically undercounted the population of American Indian/Alaskan Natives, precisely people living on reservations, likely contributors include: biracial individuals identifying only with one group and varying comfort of marginalized populations, these totals do not reflect the entirety of the ethnic group; and

**WHEREAS**, as of 2022, there are 324 federally recognized American Indian reservations in the U.S. Approximately 87 percent of those who live on the reservations identify as American Indian and Alaska Native only or in combination live outside of tribal areas; and

**WHEREAS**, the California Department of Education reported that in 2021, statewide enrollment of American Indian/Alaskan Native students was 0.4% of total enrollment and 0.26% in Santa Clara County; and

**WHEREAS**, locally, we celebrate and honor such individuals as activists and Chairwomen of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Council, Charlene Nijmeh. Chairwoman Nijmeh is an environmental steward whose focus on ecology and conservation led her to found Green Education Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to recycling education for schools. Through her support, the Muwekma Tribe joined Protect Coyote Valley Coalition in September 2020; an initiative focused on persevering the green foothills in the southern end of San Jose; and

**WHEREAS**, such organizations as The Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) with its five Santa Clara County chapters are committed to supporting and advancing Native Americans in science, technology engineering, and math (STEM) education and careers. And, the Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley, under the leadership of Sonya M. Tetnowski, a Makah Tribal Member, has offered comprehensive health care and wellness services since 1977; and

**WHEREAS**, the Muwekma Ohlone, Amah Mutsun, Esselen, and Taymen tribes of our region have suffered severe injustice and dispossession. The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) honors and supports the first people of the region as efforts are made to revive their culture, language, and history; and

**WHEREAS**, the SCCOE Environmental Literacy Leadership Collaborative and the Growing Garden projects advocate for the care of native land by planting indigenous plants and using restorative methods; and

**WHEREAS**, SCCOE is committed to enhancing equity, inclusion, diversity, and partnership and remains dedicated to providing schools and districts with resources and supports to implement the History Social-Science standards and civic engagement, and promote understanding of economics, geography, world and U.S. history, and government in schools; and

**WHEREAS**, the History Social Science Framework states students should appreciate the diversity of Indigenous People and Tribal Communities and investigate the history of California and the United States and the ways in which colonialism, the mission system, and forced removal impacted their daily lives; and

**WHEREAS**, teaching and learning about Indigenous People and Tribal Communities should be designed to celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and include stories of success, community collaboration, and solidarity, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth; now

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Santa Clara County Board of Education and the County Superintendent of Schools do hereby adopt this resolution to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day in October and November as Native American Heritage Month.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the County Board of Education at a meeting held on October 4, 2023, by the following vote:

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

NOES: none

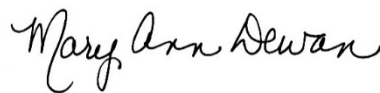
ABSTAIN: none

ABSENT: none



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Victoria Chon, President  
Santa Clara County Board of Education



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