

RESOLUTION HONORING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE/NATIVE AMERICANS
SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTION No. 2289-2

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 Office of Education (SCCOE) is honored to acknowledge and celebrate local and national American Indians and the significant contributions made to grow the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, on a national level, there are Native Americans that continue to make history, such as James Ramos, the first California Native American to be elected to the State Assembly, and Joy Harjo, the nation's 23rd Poet Laureate and the first Native American poet to serve in the position; 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, over 70% of American Indian and Alaskan Native people now live in urban areas, with California having the largest population in the country; 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 2019 census American Community Survey reported 7,082 American Indian/Alaskan Natives living in Santa Clara County representing over 180 tribes; 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, the California Department of Education reported that in the 2020-2021 academic year, statewide enrollment of American Indian/Alaskan Native students was 0.5% of total enrollment and 0.3% 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) joins the City of San Jose in honoring and supporting the first people of the region as efforts are made to revive their culture, language, and history; and

WHEREAS, SCCOE Environmental Literacy Leadership Collaborative and the new 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; 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.

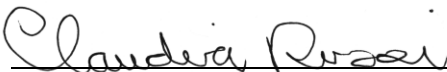
PASSED AND ADOPTED by the County Board of Education at a meeting held on October 6, 2021, by the following vote:

AYES: President Rossi, Vice President Ortiz, Trustees Chon, Kamei, Sreekrishnan and Mah


NOES: none

ABSTAIN: none

ABSENT: Trustee Di Salvo



Claudia Rossi, President
Santa Clara County Board of Education



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