



ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS Oregon became the second state to permanently recognize Arab American Heritage Month when in 2021, former Governor Kate Brown signed into law House Bill 2914; and

WHEREAS the Arab world is diverse and encompasses people with heritage from 22 countries, including Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen; and

WHEREAS the Arab nations are ethnically, politically, and religiously diverse but share a common cultural and linguistic heritage that connects them to one another in Arab heritage; and

WHEREAS 91 students currently in our schools learned Arabic as their first language, bringing culturally rich and linguistic assets to our school communities; and

WHEREAS the month has been named *Arab American* Heritage Month but is nonetheless a celebration of the heritage, culture, history, and contributions of ALL Arab community members; and

WHEREAS there is a growing need for language and cultural support, and Salem-Keizer Public Schools' Arabic Native-Language Specialist and Community School Outreach Coordinator serve as crucial resources for Arab families and students; and

WHEREAS for more than a century, Arab Americans have made valuable contributions to virtually every aspect of American society: in medicine, law, business, education, technology, government, military service, math, science, culture and helped to build a better community; and

WHEREAS the history of Arab Americans in the U.S. remains neglected or defaced by misconceptions, bigotry, and anti-Arab hate in the forms of targeted crimes and speech; and

WHEREAS Arab American issues, such as civil rights abuses, harmful stereotyping and bullying must be combated in the forms of education and awareness; and

WHEREAS Salem-Keizer Public Schools condemns such harassment and violence across the country and within our community; and

WHEREAS Arab community members share an equal desire to see a peaceful and diverse society, where every individual feels safe, welcome, and included;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Salem-Keizer Public Schools Board of Directors proclaims April 2024 to be Arab American Heritage Month and invites our community to join in learning about the rich culture, history and contributions of our students and staff of Arab heritage and also in making this a time for education and awareness so that Salem-Keizer continues moving forward and working together to make all students, families, staff and community members feel safe and welcome in our district.

Karina Guzmán Ortiz, Chairperson, Board of Directors
Salem-Keizer Public Schools

April 9, 2024

Date