

OAK GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT RESOLUTION NO. 1460-04/24

RECOGNIZING THE MONTH OF APRIL AS NATIONAL ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

WHEREAS, the Oak Grove School District Board of Education is honored to join communities throughout the country to recognize and celebrate April 2024 as National Arab American Heritage Month (Arab American Heritage Month); and

WHEREAS, each April since 2017, the United States (U.S.) celebrates Arab and Arab American culture and contributions to our nation and local communities; and

WHEREAS, every April, the Oak Grove School District shall celebrate Arab American Heritage Month given the rationale herein provided;

WHEREAS, Arab American Heritage Month is an opportunity to share the contributions of Arab and Arab American people across various fields promoting representation, understanding, and inclusivity within the school environment; and

WHEREAS, acknowledging both the presence and importance of Arab American students, families, and staff members aligns with our Oak Grove School District's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and supports our efforts to enhance students' sense of belonging, cross-cultural understanding, and promote global citizenship; and

WHEREAS, the Oak Grove School District recognizes the significant contributions of Arab and Arab American individuals in our community, state, and the world, as leaders, scientists, politicians, educators, authors, artists, public servants, and more and who have helped form the fabric of American History; and,

WHEREAS, Arab Americans have made crucial contributions to our collective struggle for a more just and fair society, leading movements for social justice and working to ensure that the opportunities they have secured are extended to others; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Education (CDE), Santa Clara County Office of Education, and the Oak Grove School District Board of Education encourage all schools and local educational agencies to proactively communicate with educators the importance of integrating Arab American Studies within the local educational agencies' curriculum; and

WHEREAS, fostering a sense of belonging and ensuring students see themselves reflected in the curriculum and schooling are essential elements in promoting inclusive education; and

WHEREAS, promoting understanding and providing students with diverse perspectives and histories, are vital tools in combating racism and discrimination against Arab and Arab Americans;

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon us to prioritize this focus due to the escalating concerns of anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia, both nationally and globally; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans are not recognized through a respective category in the U.S. Census and because of this, reporting numbers for population are almost never exact, the U.S. Department of State does estimate that there are more than 3,500,000 Arab Americans in the U.S., from a variety of faith backgrounds including Christians, Jews, and Muslims originating from any of the 22 Arabic speaking countries;

WHEREAS, this includes over 700,000 Arab Americans in California, the largest number in any state, with specifically the Bay Area being home to some of the U.S.'s largest Arab populations, including Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, and Morocco; and

WHEREAS, in March 2024, the federal government established a new Middle East and North Africa (MENA) category for the US census. This development highlights the importance of acknowledging Arab Americans' presence in the country and their heritage from the Middle East and North Africa. It also aids in essential data collection for government agencies, including local educational bodies, which depend on accurate demographic information; and

WHEREAS, "MENA" and "SWANA" (Southwest Asian and North African) are both terms referring to the region encompassing the Middle East and North Africa, the discussions surrounding these terms emphasize the nuances of identity and representation, stressing the need for linguistic distinctions that account for the region's history, geography, and the importance of political and cultural sensitivity. SWANA aims for inclusivity of the region's diverse peoples and cultures, while MENA maintains a more established, though potentially less comprehensive, focus; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Oak Grove School District supports the White House's initiative and establishes a distinct category for data collection that honors both Arab Americans and the rich heritage of the region. To promote inclusivity, the Oak Grove School District shall use the term Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) for its data collection purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Oak Grove School District Board of Education does hereby proclaim the month of April 2024 as Arab American Heritage Month and every April in perpetuity and that all educational sites be encouraged to recognize the contributions of Arab and Arab Americans through our curriculum and activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Oak Grove School District encourages staff, students, and community members to commemorate, celebrate, and educate future generations about Arab and Arab American contributions and their significance in communities across our nation. Additionally, the Oak Grove School District Board of Education reaffirms its commitment to public education regarding the history of Arab Americans in the United States, California, and San Jose through Arab American Studies.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Oak Grove School District renews its commitment to the safety, well-being, and teaching of all ethnic populations, including Arab and Arab American peoples.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Education of the Oak Grove School District at a regular meeting held on this 18th day of April, 2024, by the following vote:

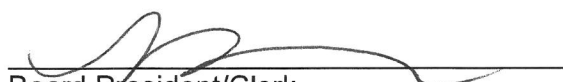
AYES: C. Hernandez, D. Martinez, J. Pacheco, Jr, T. Jaro, B. Gonzalez

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution is duly introduced, passed, and adopted at the time and place and by the vote as noted above.



Board President/Clerk
Board of Trustees
Oak Grove School District