San Mateo Union High School District
Juneteenth Proclamation
June 19, 2023

WHEREAS, after the Union Army captured New Orleans in 1862, slave owners in Confederate states migrated to Texas with more than 150,000 enslaved Black persons. For three years, even after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, enslaved Black Americans in Texas remained in brutal bondage, immorally and illegally deprived of their freedom and basic dignity.

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865 — over 2 years after President Lincoln declared all enslaved persons free — Union Army troops marched to Galveston, Texas, to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation and free the last enslaved Black Americans in Texas.

WHEREAS, those who were freed from bondage celebrated their long-overdue emancipation on June 19. Today, our Nation commemorates Juneteenth: a chance to celebrate human freedom, reflect on the grievous and ongoing legacy of slavery, and rededicate ourselves to rooting out the systemic racism that continues to plague our society as we strive to deliver the full promise of America to every American.

WHEREAS, the post-emancipation period known as Reconstruction (1865-1877) marked an era of great hope, uncertainty, and struggle for the nation as a whole. Formerly enslaved people immediately sought to reunify families, establish schools, run for political office, push radical legislation and even sue slaveholders for compensation.

WHEREAS, the joyous commemorations that began in Texas spread around the nation, with cities and communities in California joining in celebration of this milestone in the ongoing American journey toward freedom for all.

WHEREAS, since 2003, the State of California has celebrated Juneteenth as a day to honor and reflect on the significant contributions of Black Americans to our nation.

WHEREAS, Opal Lee - the 94-year-old activist known as the “grandmother of Juneteenth” pushed for years for June 19 to become a national holiday, which included walking 1,400 miles from Fort Worth, Texas, to Washington, D.C., at 90 years old in 2016 to bring awareness of America’s other independence day.

WHEREAS, President Joe Biden signed a bill in 2021 making Juneteenth a Federal Holiday.

WHEREAS, we are often reminded that the poisonous ideology of racism has not yet been defeated. Juneteenth is a day to reflect on both bondage and freedom — a day of both pain and purpose. It is, in equal measure, a remembrance of both the long, hard night of slavery and subjugation, as well as a celebration of the promise of a brighter morning to come.

WHEREAS, On Juneteenth, we remember our extraordinary capacity to heal, to hope, and to emerge from our worst moments as a stronger, freer, and more just Nation. It is also a day to celebrate the power and resilience of Black Americans, who have endured generations of oppression in the ongoing journey toward equal justice, equal dignity, equal rights, and equal opportunity in America.

WHEREAS, we urge members of our community to reflect on the ongoing cause of freedom for Black Americans. As we honor Juneteenth, let us all renew our commitment to use our power to stamp out racism in our communities and institutions and help secure freedom for all.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED the San Mateo Union High School District does hereby declare June 19, 2023, as “Juneteenth National Freedom Day: A Day of Observance.” PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Trustees of the San Mateo Union High School District on the 8th day of June, 2023.