

**San Mateo Union High School District
Proclamation Recognizing March 1-31, 2026
As National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**

WHEREAS, National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (D.D.A.M.), observed throughout March, is a nationwide event to promote acceptance for the inclusion of all people with developmental disabilities and to continue to address the barriers that exist; and

WHEREAS, Developmental disabilities arise early in life and affect language, mobility, learning, every day activities of daily living and living independently; and

WHEREAS, Recent estimates in the United States indicate that one in six, or about 17%, of children aged 3 through 17 years of age have one or more developmental disabilities. This represents 1.3 billion people globally. D.D.A.M. is celebrated to recognize the strengths of people with disabilities and to affirm their right to complete access, participation, and belonging in environments, valuing and honoring their talents, contributions; and

WHEREAS, inclusive educational environments benefit all students by emphasizing empathy, collaboration, and academic growth, and they effectively prepare students to participate in a diverse school environment and society; and

WHEREAS, during the 1950s and 1960s, the federal government, with the strong support and advocacy of family associations, began to develop and validate practices for children with disabilities and their families. Previously, children with developmental disabilities were denied access to services and education, and were often placed in restrictive and inhumane conditions in state-run, overcrowded institutions. Parents of children with disabilities demanded that attention to the needs of their children be recognized; and

WHEREAS, In 1973, President Richard Nixon signed the Rehabilitation Act into law, including Section 504, the first federal civil rights protection for individuals with disabilities, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance and laid the foundation for equal access to education, employment, and community participation for people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, On November 29, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), or the EHA. The EHA guaranteed a free, appropriate public education, or FAPE, in every state and locality across the country and later turned into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990. This transition expanded eligibility criteria, introduced early intervention services, strengthened parental rights, and enhanced support for students through individualized education and transition planning; and

WHEREAS, In 1987, President Reagan proclaimed March as National Developmental Disability Awareness Month to make certain that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have access to work, the ability to contribute to society, and can enjoy meaningful lives that are driven by their choice; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, President Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.), which was amended again to ensure the goals of independence, integration, and productivity toward interdependence, inclusion, and recognition of individual contributions are realized; and

WHEREAS, The San Mateo Union High School District acknowledges the intersectionality of disability with all other forms of discrimination and strives to provide instruction in disability history and the disability rights movement to enhance the understanding of disability by incorporating social, cultural, historical, and legal perspectives, including the intersections between disability and other identities. Disability is a part of human diversity; and

WHEREAS, The San Mateo Union High School District recognizes the importance of student voices and advocacy, and is committed to supporting students with developmental disabilities in developing skills such as critical thinking and problem solving in education, social awareness, job and career training, and post secondary outcomes; and

WHEREAS, The San Mateo Union High School District prioritizes the support and education of its 91 students served in our Bay Academy at Burlingame, Hillsdale and Mills High Schools and 83 students served the Bay University programs at Burlingame and Capuchino High Schools and the Bay Quest Program at the College of San Mateo to enhance opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Through the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (N.A.C.D.D.), D.D.A.M. 2026 seeks to highlight the challenges and achievements of people with developmental disabilities; promoting inclusion and advocacy. The N.A.C.D.D. has adopted the color orange as the official color of D.D.A.M., symbolizing energy and positivity. The San Mateo Union High School District schools will encourage the wearing of orange to spread a positive message for inclusion; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Board of the San Mateo Union High School District, that the District takes great pleasure in its responsibility to recognize March 2026 as National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and strives to honor and include all people with disabilities and consciously promote and foster inclusive, safe and welcoming environments for all.

SAN MATEO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Passed and adopted by the Governing Board of the San Mateo Union High School District on the 26th day of February 2026.



Superintendent

Teri Chavez

President, Board of Trustees