

**San Mateo Union High School District
Proclamation Recognizing April 1-30, 2026
As National Arab American Heritage Month**

WHEREAS, April is recognized nationally as Arab American Heritage Month. Officially established via a declaration by President Joe Biden in April 2021, it is a time to formally recognize the achievements of Arab Americans and celebrate the Arab American community's rich heritage and numerous contributions to society; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans are a powerful part of our society, representing of diverse backgrounds and faiths, vibrant tradition, bold innovation, hard work, commitment to community, and

WHEREAS, An estimated 3.7 million Americans have Arab roots, according to the Arab American Institute, with ancestries traced to 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, including Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Morocco, Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and others; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans have long been an integral part of the United States, contributing to every region of the country and enriching society through their achievements, culture, and dedication; and

WHEREAS, California, to our advantage, is home to a wide cultural spectrum of diverse people. Our state is fortunate to have the largest Arab American population in the country with more than 715,000 Californians of Arab descent; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo Union High School District serves, recognizes, and appreciates our Arab American students and their families. The District is committed to cultivating a welcoming and equitable environment for all students, including Arab Americans, ensuring that every student feels recognized, respected, and empowered; and

WHEREAS, the District sees Arab American Heritage month as an opportunity to educate its students about Arab American culture and history and deepen students' understanding. We know as educators how important knowledge is in combating hate speech, and we use this opportunity to educate our students about the contributions, experiences and perspective of Arab Americans, fostering respect, empathy, and appreciation for diversity in our schools and communities; and

WHEREAS, Arab Americans have made significant contributions across many fields, including technology, sports, and science, such as Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple Inc., whose Syrian heritage and visionary leadership in Silicon Valley transformed global technology and inspired generations of innovators; Robert Saleh, the first Arab American head coach in the National Football League and former defensive coordinator of the San Francisco 49ers, whose

leadership energized fans throughout the Bay Area; and Charles Elachi, Lebanese American scientist and former director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, whose pioneering work advanced space exploration and inspired students and scientists across California; and

WHEREAS, we see Arab American Heritage month as an opportunity to lift up the the profound and wide-ranging contributions of this vibrant community in all facets of our society and remain committed to doing so outside of the confinement of Arab American heritage month; and

WHEREAS, we also recognize that, even as Arab Americans enrich our nation, many continue to face prejudice, discrimination and harmful stereotypes. The District is committed to addressing bias and promoting equity, ensuring that instances of prejudice and violence are actively challenged and disrupted in our schools; and

WHEREAS, we as a District are grateful for the rich experiences Arab Americans bring to our classrooms and workplace and for the exquisite contributions they make to our schools; and community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Board of San Mateo Union High School District that April is designated as National Arab American Heritage Month and that SMUHSD encourages schools, staff, students, and families to observe April as National Arab American Heritage Month by celebrating and recognizing the past, present and future contributions made by Arab Americans in our country and in our school community.

SAN MATEO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Passed and adopted on the 26th day of March, 2026.



Superintendent

Teri Chavez

President, Board of Trustees