

**San Mateo Union High School District
Proclamation Recognizing July 1-31, 2026
As Disability Pride Month**

WHEREAS, Disability Pride Month is celebrated nationwide each July to honor the strength, resilience, and contributions of people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, July commemorates the landmark passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 1990 - one of the most significant civil-rights laws in U.S. history which prohibits discrimination, requires reasonable workplace accommodations, and mandates accessibility in public spaces; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization estimates that, as of 2023, 1.3 billion people approximately 16 percent of the world's population (or one in six of us) - experience a significant disability; and

WHEREAS, approximately 12 percent of students in the San Mateo Union High School District (SMUHSD) identify as having a disability, mirroring the national average; and

WHEREAS, Ed Roberts (1939–1995), born in San Mateo and widely regarded as the “father of the independent living movement,” experienced significant barriers to secure full access to higher education after becoming quadriplegic from polio at age 14. Roberts attended Burlingame High over the telephone before attending the College of San Mateo (class of 1962). Though initially denied admission to UC Berkeley due to his disability, he successfully challenged that decision and later co-founded the Physically Disabled Students Program and the nation's first Center for Independent Living - milestones that transformed access and advocacy for people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Roberts' pioneering work in self-determination, community integration, and access equity laid essential groundwork for the disability rights movement and directly aligns with the foundational principles of disability justice - a framework that centers intersectional experiences of disabled individuals, especially those from marginalized communities, and seeks to dismantle all forms of discrimination; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, disability rights leaders, community advocates, and people with disabilities occupied the Federal Building in San Francisco to demand the enforcement of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a landmark civil rights provision prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities receiving federal funding; and

WHEREAS, the historic Section 504 sit-in, which included the leadership and advocacy of Ed Roberts and many other disability rights activists, helped bring national attention to the fight for equal access, inclusion, and dignity years before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and

WHEREAS, SMUHSD is legally mandated to provide every student a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and to ensure a learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of disability; and

WHEREAS, SMUHSD's Section 504 policies commit the District to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities and to ensuring accessible participation for parents, guardians, and community members; and

WHEREAS, SMUHSD, in partnership with the San Mateo County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), offers a continuum of Special Education services including specialized academic instruction, speech-language and occupational therapy, and transition to adult life programming for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); and

WHEREAS, the District actively cultivates parent and caregiver engagement through its Special Education Advisory Committee, which provides information, resources, and community-building opportunities for families; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) extends critical support to SMUHSD and other county districts via county-wide programs for students aged 0-22 and services such as job training, which promotes vocational exploration and training; and

WHEREAS, Roberts's legacy continues to inspire SMUHSD's initiatives - such as Bay Academy and Bay University - designed to advance disability equity and prepare students for independent, fulfilling adult lives; and

WHEREAS, despite significant progress, many individuals with disabilities still encounter barriers and bias; disability justice leaders continue to advocate and fight along with the support of families, allies, community agencies, employers, and our district to dismantle ableist barriers.

WHEREAS, students with disabilities enrich our classrooms, campuses, and community through their diverse perspectives, skills, and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Disability Pride Month offers an opportunity to celebrate achievements in the disability-rights movement, acknowledge ongoing challenges, and recommit to creating a fully accessible and inclusive society;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Mateo Union High School District hereby proclaims July 1 – 31, 2026, as "Disability Pride Month," and encourages staff, students, families, and community members to join in recognizing and celebrating the contributions of people with disabilities throughout our District and beyond.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 25th day of June, 2026.

Superintendent

President, Board of Trustees