



**RESOLUTION #23-16**  
**IN RECOGNITION OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH**

**WHEREAS**, families have been deeply affected by the pandemic, and children are likely facing increased stress due to the changes, fear and uncertainty caused by illness, isolation, impending homelessness, and job and healthcare loss at rates never before seen; and

**WHEREAS**, children have been found to be at a higher risk of abuse or witnessing domestic abuse at this time of long-term school closures; and

**WHEREAS**, children and families are dealing with the long overdue societal reckoning with police violence, a spike in hate crimes and significantly higher-than-average death rates linked to COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 20 percent of youth have a diagnosed mental health disorder in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the average age of early signs of mental illness is 14, when most students are entering high school; and

**WHEREAS**, an estimated 60 percent of students with emotional, behavioral and mental health disorders do not graduate from high school, according to the U.S. Department of Education; and

**WHEREAS**, National Survey of Drug Use and Health data shows mental health diagnoses, suicide rates, non-suicidal self-injury such as cutting, and emergency room visits for students experiencing mental health issues are all on the rise; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDC has declared suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth ages 15 to 19 years old; and

**WHEREAS**, the number of children ages 6-12 who visited children's hospitals for suicidal thoughts or self harm has more than doubled since 2016, according to the Children's Hospital Association; and

**WHEREAS**, researchers from the University of Montreal found that students with untreated mental illness are more likely to be chronically absent, more disruptive in class, have lower academic achievement and ultimately drop out; and

**WHEREAS**, the University of Maryland’s Center for School Mental Health (CSMH) has found that educating staff, students and parents in the signs and symptoms of mental illness is key to both early intervention and dismantling the stigma surrounding mental health; and

**WHEREAS**, the CSMH reports that students are more likely to follow through with mental health services in school settings, and bringing mental health services onto campus enables easier communication among providers, parents and teachers; and

**WHEREAS**, schools that implement comprehensive mental health systems see improved academic performance, fewer special education placements, decreased disciplinary actions and higher graduation rates; and

**WHEREAS**, spreading awareness of the importance of mental health can help people realize the many ways in which mental illness impacts them and those around them, and can provide the opportunity to learn about available services.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Santa Cruz County Board of Education proudly proclaims the month of May as Mental Health Awareness Month, in recognition of any student or Santa Cruz County Office of Education staff member challenged by mental illness. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education stands ready to support you.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Santa Cruz County Board of Education, County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this day, the 20th day, of April, 2023 by the following vote:

<b>Ayes:</b>	<b>Filicetti, Nichols, Roth, Van Allen</b>
<b>Nays:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Abstain:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Absent:</b>	<b>Acosta, Alto, Sanchez</b>



Bruce Van Allen  
Board President



Dr. Faris Sabbah  
County Superintendent of Schools  
Secretary, Santa Cruz County Board of Education