



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY OFFICE OF
EDUCATION
DR. FARIS SABBAH - SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Santa Cruz County Board of Education • 400 Encinal Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 • Tel (831) 466-5900 • www.santacruzcoe.org

Mr. Ed Acosta • Dr. Stacey Kyle • Mr. Greg Larson • Ms. Sue Roth
Mr. Abel Sanchez • Mr. Bruce Van Allen • Ms. Rachel Williams

Student Trustee: Vicente Guillen Martinez and Ash Immoor

RESOLUTION #26-20
IN RECOGNITION OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, families have been deeply affected by traumatic events, 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; and

WHEREAS, mental health conditions are a leading cause of disability in the United States and affect millions of children, adolescents, and adults in California; and

WHEREAS, mental illness includes such conditions as schizophrenia, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders; 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, half of all lifetime mental illnesses begin by age 14, when most students are entering high school; and

WHEREAS, students with emotional and behavioral disabilities have significantly lower graduation rates than their peers, according to federal education data; and

WHEREAS, national data show that youth mental health challenges, including diagnoses, self-harm, and crisis-related ER visits, have increased significantly over the past decade; 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 on 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, the California Department of Education also recognizes the first full week of May as *Screen-Free Week* (May 4 to 10, 2026), to support teen mental health and encourage more creative play, human connections, and engagement with the natural world; 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; and

WHEREAS, recent changes in federal policy, funding, and staffing are increasing economic uncertainty and social conflict, potentially triggering or exacerbating mental health conditions in youth and adults;

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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Santa Cruz County Office of Education reaffirms its commitment to supporting students, staff, and families experiencing mental health challenges.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Santa Cruz County Board of Education, County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this 16th day of April 2026, by the following vote:

AYES: Acosta, Kyle, Larson, Van Allen, Williams

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

Resolution #26-20 In Recognition Of Mental Health Awareness Month
Santa Cruz County Board of Education
April 16, 2026

ABSENT: Roth, Sanchez

Rachel Williams

Rachel Williams, Board President
Santa Cruz County Board of Education

Faris Sabbah

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