SAN LEANDRO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Resolution No. 16-45

National Youth Justice Awareness Month
October 2016

WHEREAS, the historical role of the juvenile court system is to rehabilitate and treat youthful offenders while holding them accountable and maintaining public safety and is therefore better equipped to work with youth than the punitive nature of the adult criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, youth are developmentally different from adults and these differences have been documented by research on the adolescent brain and acknowledged by the US and State supreme courts, many state and federal laws that prohibit youth under age 18 from taking on major adult responsibilities such as voting, jury duty, and military service; and

WHEREAS, youth who are placed under the commitment of the juvenile court system are able to access age appropriate services, education, and remain closer to their families, all of which reduces the likelihood of future offending; and

WHEREAS, each year, there are more than 1 million arrests of young people under the age of 18, and an estimated 250,000 youth are tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults every year in the United States and most of the youth are prosecuted for non-violent offenses; and

WHEREAS, involvement in the justice system—even as a minor, and even if it does not result in a finding of guilt, delinquency, or conviction—can significantly impede a person's ability to pursue a higher education, obtain a loan, find employment, or secure quality housing; and

WHEREAS, most laws allowing the prosecuting of youth as adults were enacted prior to research evidence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which demonstrated that prosecuting youth in adult court actually decreases public safety as, on average, they are 34 percent more likely to commit future crimes than youth retained in the juvenile system; and

WHEREAS, youth of color and youth with disabilities and mental health issues are disproportionally represented at all stages of the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, it is harmful to public safety and to young offenders to confine youth in adult jails or prisons where they are significantly more likely to be physically and sexually assaulted and where they are often placed in solitary confinement; and

WHEREAS, youth sentenced as adults receive an adult criminal record which deters future education or employment opportunities and the collateral consequences normally applied in the adult justice system should not automatically apply to youth arrested for crimes before the age of 18; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that youth who receive extremely long sentences deserve an opportunity to demonstrate their potential to grow and change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the justice system acts not as a means for perpetuating a cycle of hopelessness, but as a framework for uplifting our young people with a sense of purpose so they can contribute to America's success;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that in recognition of the important work done by youth justice programs, the San Leandro Unified School District Board of Education do hereby proclaim the month of October as National Youth Justice Awareness Month and urge all citizens to support our youth by participating in appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 11th day of October, 2016 by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

_____	_____
Vince J. Rosato, Board President	Mike McLaughlin, Ed.D., Superintendent