

**ALBANY UNIFIED SCHOOL
DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**PROCLAMATION NO. 2024-25-07:
RECOGNIZING MAY AS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH**

WHEREAS, although most of us have been able to return to our “pre-pandemic” lives for some time now, our community’s families were deeply affected by the pandemic, with high levels of stress driven by the fear and uncertainty caused by illness, isolation, and job and healthcare loss at rates never before seen; and

WHEREAS, the trauma of the pandemic layered upon concerns about, among other things, food and housing insecurity, gun violence, climate change, political polarization, racism, transphobia, bigotry of all kinds, deportation and armed conflict and human rights violations around the world; and

WHEREAS, children and families continue to deal with the impact of the isolation and halted academic, social and emotional growth and development that occurred as a result of the pandemic, in addition to long overdue societal reckoning with police violence against Black people, a spike in anti-Asian and anti-Semitic hate crimes and significantly higher-than-average death rates linked to COVID-19 among Latino/Latinx, Black and Native American communities; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that more than 20 percent of youth have a diagnosed mental health disorder in the United States, and the National Institute of Mental Health reported that an estimated 49.5% of U.S. adolescents aged 13-18 has experienced a mental health disorder of some kind at some point; and

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

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education reported that only 40 percent of students with emotional, behavioral and mental health disorders graduate from high school, compared to the national average of 76 percent; and

WHEREAS, the CDC declared suicide to be the second leading cause of death among youth ages 15 to 19 years old, and reported that suicide rates among persons aged 10–24 years old increased by 36.6% during 2018–2021 among Black persons, with suicide rates for Black youth in California doubling from 2014 to 2020 as reported by the California Department of Public Health; and

WHEREAS, the number of children ages 6-12 who visited children’s hospitals for suicidal thoughts or self-harm 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 health; and

WHEREAS, the CSMH reported 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.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Albany Unified School District Board of Education proclaims the month of May as Mental Health Awareness Month, and encourages all District schools to take actions that spread awareness, counteract stigma, and support students and families struggling with mental health issues. District administrators, teachers, and staff will recognize this month with appropriate instructional activities.

DATE: April 8, 2025

President of the Board of Trustees
Albany Unified School District
Alameda County, California