Recognizing February 2020 as National African American History Month

Whereas, National African American History Month first originated as Negro History Week in 1926 as part of an initiative by writer and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson to recognize the heritage and achievements of African Americans and to enhance knowledge about African American history; and

Whereas, this year's theme for African American History month is "African Americans and the Vote" in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Fifteenth Amendment (1870), which gave African American men the right to vote, and the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment, which extended the right to vote to women; and

Whereas, the Civil War and passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 ended 250 years of chattel slavery for African Americans in the United States; and

Whereas, African Americans’ struggle to receive the right to vote was hard-fought and challenged for another hundred years until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which sought to overcome legal barriers at the state and local levels that prevented African Americans from exercising their guaranteed right to vote;

Whereas, the legacy of slavery and electoral discrimination is present in the United State as legislatures gerrymander districts and impose restrictions to discourage voting among African Americans, especially the poor, and children of color and their families are impacted by opportunity gaps that exist across the country, the State of California, and the County of San Mateo;

Whereas, the ongoing struggle for voting rights among African Americans and other minorities remains disheartening, but the 2018 mid-term elections saw a record number of minority and women candidates voted into office across the country, sparking hope that the United States is a democracy for all – not just some;

Whereas, the rise in the number of African Americans elected to public office, as well as their growing contributions to the fields such as government, business, medicine, science, the arts, media, and education should be acknowledged, celebrated, and taught in our schools;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the San Mateo County Board of Education and the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools recognize the significance of hard-earned voting rights to the African American community; acknowledge the value of African American residents to the strength, health, and richness of San Mateo County; promote greater awareness, education, and celebration of National African American History Month; and encourage schools and residents to understand and address the pernicious legacy of slavery and continued discrimination on the African American community and our society as a whole.

SAN MATEO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Passed and Adopted on this Fifteenth Day of January 2020

SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

President