

SAN MATEO-FOSTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESOLUTION NO. 28/19-20

**DENOUNCING STIGMATIZATION, HATEFUL RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

WHEREAS, fear and uncertainty around COVID-19, coupled with hateful political rhetoric at the federal level, has led to a sharp increase in violence, acts of racism and stigmatization of groups of people, notably Asian Americans; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that attaching locations or ethnicity to the disease is dangerous. The official name for the disease was deliberately chosen to avoid stigmatization – the “co” stands for Corona, “vi” for virus and “d” for disease, and 19 for the emergence of the disease in 2019. It is not a “Chinese virus,” “Asian virus” or “Wuhan virus”; and

WHEREAS, stigmatization represents a serious threat to our collective emergency response to the pandemic. It furthers dangerous and false information about how COVID-19 spreads, misinforms people’s perception of risk and repeats mistakes in our own history during past emergencies when racist and xenophobic sentiment targeted vulnerable groups; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) asserts that stigma associated with COVID-19 may currently be affecting persons of Asian descent, people who have traveled, and emergency responders or healthcare professionals; and

WHEREAS, incidents of hate against Asian Americans is increasingly documented in the Bay Area; and

WHEREAS, Asian Americans, immigrants and health care workers cannot be made the scapegoats of COVID-19 and Asian Americans do not represent a greater risk of spreading COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, medical personnel that are on the front lines in caring for patients with COVID- 19 – our neighbors, our relatives and our friends – must be provided our unwavering support, as they sacrifice so much to continue to work through the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) states that stigmatized groups may be subjected to social avoidance or rejection, denials of healthcare, education, housing or

employment, and physical violence, and also indicates that stigma can result in more severe health problems and difficulties controlling a disease outbreak by driving people to hide the illness to avoid discrimination, preventing people from seeking health care immediately, and discouraging them from adopting healthy behaviors; and

WHEREAS, the Stop-AAPI-Hate center has gathered over 1,000 reports of anti-Asian discrimination in just over one week. Established by San Francisco State University Asian American Studies, Chinese for Affirmative Action, and the Asian Pacific Planning and Policy Council, it continues to receive about 100 incidents a day; and

WHEREAS, these incidents ranges from shunning and verbal harassment to workplace discrimination and physical assault. A large percent involves spitting and coughing at Asian Americans. The reports reveal that virulent anger and hostility are now directed at Asian Americans; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo-Foster City School District is a diverse community – more than 26% our population is of Asian or Pacific Island descent; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo-Foster City School District routinely celebrates its cultural diversity and is now extremely concerned for the well-being of our families that might be facing discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo-Foster City School District feels that it is important to address all forms of discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo – Foster City School District addresses discrimination, hate speech and stigmatization on a case by case basis and through programs such as Positive Behavior Support and Intervention and Restorative Circles and through Social Emotional Lessons, Advisory Lessons, Random Acts of Kindness, Kindness Week and Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo-Foster City School District will continue to promote anti-stigma messaging through its communication channels, including the website, social media, letters, and more; and

NOW, THEREFORE, THE SAN MATEO-FOSTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, HEREBY RESOLVES that it does stand united against hate and denounces stigmatization, hateful racism and xenophobia during the COVID-19 pandemic, against particular groups of people, notably Asian Americans, immigrants and health care workers.

Adopted by the Governing Board of the San Mateo-Foster City School District at the regular meeting held on the 7th of May, 2020, by the following vote:

AYES: _____

NOES: _____

ABSENT: _____

ATTEST:

Secretary of the Board