333 S. Beaudry Ave. 24th Floor | Los Angeles, CA 90017 | achieve.lausd.net

News Release

CONTACT: Silvia K. Martinez
213-241-8333, Silvia.K.Martinez@lausd.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2023

Los Angeles Unified Board of Education Approves Resolution Declaring March 21 as World Down Syndrome Awareness Day

Los Angeles, CA (March 7, 2023) – Today, the Los Angeles Unified Board of Education approved a resolution sponsored by Board Vice President Scott M. Schmerelson, and co-sponsored by all the Board Members in attendance, honoring March 21 as World Down Syndrome Awareness Day and encouraging schools to hold activities utilizing the #WithUsNotForUs theme.

“It is essential that we work diligently to build awareness about what a difference providing the needed supports for people with Down Syndrome makes,” Board Vice President Schmerelson said. “We must work together to advocate for their rights, for inclusion and for their well-being.”

“As we recognize World Down Syndrome Day on March 21, Los Angeles Unified is universally fostering learning environments that promote inclusive education for students with disabilities to foster higher expectations for academic, social and vocational outcomes year-round,” Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho said. “Together we can create a more accepting world that celebrates the unique brilliance and abilities of people with Down Syndrome and raise awareness about the vital role they play in our lives and communities.”

“Days such as the March 21 commemoration of World Down Syndrome Awareness Day remind us that our schools must be inclusive places that give every student – across all abilities and learning needs – a chance for self-determination and future opportunities,” Board President

Jackie Goldberg said. “I am inspired every day by the students and parents who advocate to ensure that students have the best chance to thrive, and March is an opportunity to reflect on how we can further support them.”

“Embracing the 2023 theme, ‘With Us Not For Us’ gives us an opportunity to empower our students with special needs to lead independent and productive lives,” Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III said.

“All children have the right to access their fullest potential; we can do more to protect that right for our students with Down Syndrome,” Board Member Dr. Rocío Rivas said. “I am with the Down Syndrome community and will do my part to raise awareness, while also working to ensure that those in need have access to vital community-based support systems and timely interventions through our schools.”

“In LA Unified, we value the unique abilities and positive contributions of each and every individual,” Board Member Nick Melvoin said. “By celebrating World Down Syndrome Awareness Day, I hope we can spread awareness and encourage positive lessons throughout our classrooms to learn more about students, community members, and historical and modern figures with Down Syndrome.”

“I am proud to recognize World Down Syndrome Awareness Day and to celebrate the countless ways that our students with Down Syndrome make our communities richer and better,” Board Member Kelly Gonez said. “By working directly with our students, families and community members, we can both raise awareness and build better ways to serve those with Down Syndrome.”

“I’m proud to support the celebration of World Down Syndrome Awareness Day today and everyday as Los Angeles Unified advocates for the rights, inclusion and well-being of all scholars,” Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin said. “Our students deserve equitable learning spaces and this resolution will foster inclusion and help raise awareness of how people with Down Syndrome play a vital role in our lives and all school communities!”

“I am grateful that our District recognizes the contributions and abilities of people with Down syndrome,” Student Board Member Nathaniel Shin said. “This year’s theme, ‘With Us Not For Us’ is a call to uplift their voices and honor their experiences as we build more inclusive schools and communities together.”

###