



Santa Clara County Office of Education

Mary Ann Dewan, Ph.D.  
County Superintendent of Schools

June 19, 2020

**Juneteenth: A Statement from the Santa Clara County Office of Education.**

Today marks a momentous date in United States history and provides us with an important opportunity to reflect and honor its significance.

June 19th, also recognized as “Juneteenth,” is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery. It was on this day in 1865, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, that Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas to announce the Civil War had ended and the enslaved were now free.

Juneteenth Day celebrations have since been held to commemorate African American freedom from slavery. Honoring this day, more than 150 years later, helps us learn our history and better understand the experiences of African Americans that shaped this nation.

It also gives us an opportunity to reflect on what it really means to be free. Inequitable policies and systemic racism have proliferated oppressive behaviors and mindsets that prevent true freedom for all, rather than just some. We recognize the atrocity of slavery, the work that needs to be done to eradicate systemic oppression, and strive for the healing that has to happen for us to move forward in unity.

This tradition of celebrating Juneteenth acknowledges and condemns the atrocities and degradation of our shared past and honors resilience in the face of injustice and inhumanity, for now and future generations. We simultaneously acknowledge the historical relevance of this significant event and the generational trauma that accompanies being subject to racism, discrimination and prejudice as a barrier to positive mental and physical health and well-being, economic opportunity, and academic achievement.

The following are resources that can provide more information about the Juneteenth holiday, as well as details about online celebrations held this weekend throughout the Bay Area:

**Learn more about the history of Juneteenth:**

<https://www.juneteenth.com/history.htm>

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/teaching-juneteenth>

<https://www.studentsofhistory.com/lesson-plans>

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/what-is-juneteenth/>

**Virtual Juneteenth 2020 Celebrations:**

[Juneteenth Community Festival: June 27](#)

[Juneteenth Presentation: 'Harlem of the West: The San Francisco Fillmore Jazz Era'](#)

[Juneteenth and the Blues with Marcus Shelby](#)

[Juneteenth Celebration: Faith, Race and Justice](#)

[Sonoma County Juneteenth](#)

[Fallen Heroes, Rising Stars: A Juneteenth Dance Celebration](#)