

Portland Public Schools Board of Education
Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, March 2019

Whereas: The disability experience is a natural part of life and is valued as a part of our rich **human** diversity.

Whereas: Disability is a social construct. The 'problem' is not the medical condition that resides within the student, but the 'problem' is that society does not create welcoming, supporting environments/policies/systems for all. **Therefore, we choose here to use "dis/ability" in order to recognize differing abilities NOT as an individual trait, but rather as an artifact of our cultural, political, and economic practices (Davis, 1995). We can change the impact of dis/ability and change our lens of dis/ability to one of capacity.**

Whereas: The most effective way to change the impact of disability is by increasing our own awareness and being open to learning and acknowledging that there are systemic barriers that reduce the likelihood of those with **dis/abilities** enjoying equitable experiences and having independent, productive lives within their school and **broader** communities.

Whereas: Equitable experiences and meaningful acceptance within Portland Public Schools educational environments is a matter of social justice. Consequently, creating equitable inclusive environments is a shared responsibility of everyone because community means all.

Whereas: Policies must be developed, attitudes shaped, and equitable experiences be offered to all students; including those with developmental disabilities **and no matter their race or heritage language.**

Whereas: Portland Public Schools should do all in their power to:

Recognize the value and intersectionality of the disability experience in our students and their families, and the valued role it has in the rich diversity of our community.

Recognize the barriers presented to students with **dis/abilities**.

Create ways to include everyone; especially students with developmental dis/abilities, to be fully included in all aspects of our Portland Public Schools.

And,

Now, therefore, we, Portland Public School's Board of Education, do hereby proclaim March 2019 as

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

and galvanize efforts that will lead our schools and policy makers to create real systems change so people with developmental dis/abilities will enjoy equitable, inclusive educational experiences.