



Use of People First Language for Students with Disabilities

Participating Humboldt – Del Norte Local Education Agencies (LEAs): Arcata, Big Lagoon Union School District, Blue Lake Union School District, Bridgeville School District, Cuddeback Union School District, Cutten School District, Del Norte Unified School Districts, Eureka City Schools, Ferndale Unified School District, Fieldbrook School District, Fortuna Elementary School District, Fortuna Union High School District, Freshwater School District, Garfield School District, Green Point School District, Hydesville School District, Jacoby Creek School District, Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School District, Kneeland School District, Loleta Union School District, Maple Creek School District, Mattole Unified School District, McKinleyville Union School District, Northern Humboldt Union High School District, Northern United – Humboldt Charter School, Orick School District, Pacific Union School District, Pacific View Charter 2.0, Peninsula Union School District, Rio Dell School District, Scotia Union School District, South Bay Union School District, Southern Humboldt Unified School District, Trinidad Union School District

Use of People First Language for Students with Disabilities Policy

WHEREAS, All students deserve to be treated with dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, More than 795,000 students with disabilities receive special education services in California, comprising about ten percent of the state's public school enrollment; and

WHEREAS, The Humboldt-Del Norte Special Education Local Plan Area serves the following Local Educational Agencies comprised of more than 4,000 students with disabilities:

Humboldt County Office of Education	Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School District
Del Norte County Office of Education	Kneeland School District
Arcata School District	Loleta Union School District
Big Lagoon Union School District	Maple Creek School District
Blue Lake Union School District	Mattole Unified School District
Bridgeville School District	McKinleyville Union School District
Cuddeback Union School District	Northern Humboldt Union High School District
Cutten School District	Northern United – Humboldt Charter Orick School District
Eureka City Schools	Pacific Union School District
Ferndale Unified School District	Pacific View Charter 2.0
Fieldbrook School District	Peninsula Union School District
Fortuna Elementary School District	Rio Dell School District
Fortuna Union High School District	Scotia Union School District
Freshwater School District	South Bay Union School District
Garfield School District	Southern Humboldt Unified School District
Green Point School District	Trinidad Union School District
Hydesville School District	
Jacoby Creek School District	

WHEREAS, Students with disabilities are sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, friends, and neighbors; and

WHEREAS, The contributions of students with disabilities enrich our communities as they live, learn and share their lives; and

WHEREAS, The language used to refer to students with disabilities has a profound impact in shaping beliefs and attitudes about these students, driving policies and laws, influencing our feelings and decisions, and affecting students' daily lives; and

WHEREAS, Old, inaccurate, and inappropriate descriptors about students with disabilities perpetuate negative stereotypes and attitudinal barriers; and

WHEREAS, When we identify or describe students with disabilities primarily in terms of their disability or diagnosis, we devalue and stigmatize them; and

WHEREAS, Using thoughtful terminology can foster positive attitudes about students with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, One of the major improvements in communicating verbally or in writing with or about students with disabilities is People-First Language, which places the person ahead of his or her disability; and

WHEREAS, People-First Language is an objective form of communication that eliminates generalizations and stereotypes by focusing on the person rather than the disability; and

WHEREAS, A recent report of the Statewide Special Education Task Force called for a unified, inclusive educational system that supports all students based on individual needs;

WHEREAS, The manner in which written and verbal policies and communications refer to students with disabilities can undermine this important state educational goal; and

WHEREAS, The Humboldt-Del Norte Special Education Local Plan Area recognizes the necessity of a more respectful and humanistic view of students with disabilities; now, therefore, be it

WHEREAS, The Governing Board of the Humboldt-Del Norte Special Education Local Plan Area, resolves and affirms that state policies and procedures should utilize People-First Terminology to the greatest extent possible, especially those utilized by state and local educational agencies;.