

Implementation of SB 939: Enhancing Support for Neurodivergent Students at Da Vinci Schools

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Da Vinci Schools is pleased to inform you about the enactment of Senate Bill 939 (SB 939), a significant legislative measure aimed at promoting educational equity for neurodivergent students across California. This law mandates that educational institutions provide comprehensive resources and support for neurodivergent students, including autistic students, students with ADHD, learning disabilities, and other types of neurodivergence.

Key Provisions of SB 939:

1. **Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Anti-Discrimination Policies:** SB 939 expands existing anti-discrimination frameworks to explicitly protect neurodivergent students. This ensures that our policies at Da Vinci Schools are inclusive, safeguarding all students from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying based on neurodiversity.
2. **Resource Availability:** The California Department of Education (CDE) is now required to post and annually update a list of statewide resources supporting neurodivergent youth and their families. These resources, developed in collaboration with the UC/CSU California Collaborative for Neurodiversity and Learning, are designed to assist educational institutions like ours in providing optimal support.

Our Commitment at Da Vinci Schools:

In alignment with SB 939, Da Vinci Schools is committed to fostering an accepting, inclusive, and supportive environment led by our Neurodiversity Program Lead in implementing five key actions that support neurodivergent students' self-advocacy, self-determination, sense of belonging, and social-emotional development and well-being.

The five key actions are as follows, with examples below:

1. **Actions with Neurodivergent Students:**
Da Vinci offers opportunities for leadership, such as sharing lived experiences and contributing to acceptance campaigns. The school also provides neurodiversity clubs and committees where neurodivergent students and allies can build community, connect meaningfully, and share experiences in authentic, organic ways.
2. **Actions with Neurotypical Peers:**
Ongoing neurodiversity education and activities, including a student-led Neurodiversity Celebration Week, take place throughout the school year to normalize differences and foster acceptance.

3. **Actions with Staff:**

Educational neurodiversity tidbits are shared through weekly newsletters, professional development sessions, and Da Vinci students' lived experiences, which are shared anonymously or during lunch-and-learn events.

4. **Actions with Curriculum:**

Disability education and neurodiversity-affirming practices are directly integrated into the curriculum when relevant.

5. **Actions with the Environment:**

Da Vinci provides livestreaming and skybox seating options during whole-school assemblies to reduce sensory input. Sensory walls are installed at Da Vinci High Schools, and designated quiet quadrants are available. The use of strategies like post, prime, and provide helps students and families know what activities are coming up, what to expect, and what support will be available. Additionally, Da Vinci Schools also hosts sensory-friendly dance hours where students can enjoy connecting with others in a space acclimated (light and music volume) to their needs.

Understanding Neurodiversity-Affirming Language and Strategies:

To further support our neurodivergent students, it's essential to adopt neurodiversity-affirming language and strategies. This approach recognizes and values the diversity in how individuals think, behave, and learn, viewing neurodivergence not as a deficit but as a natural variation.

- **Neurodiversity-Affirming Language:** Using respectful and inclusive language helps in acknowledging and validating the experiences of neurodivergent individuals. For guidance on appropriate terminology, refer to the [Neurodivergent Affirming Language Guide](#).

Using the ***social model of disability*** to describe disabilities. This model is a framework that understands disability not as a problem within the individual, but as a result of the way society is organized, such as physical and sensory barriers and negative stereotypes.

- **Neurodiversity-Affirming Strategies:** Implementing supportive strategies can enhance the learning experience for neurodivergent students. Some effective practices include:

Strength-based approach

Flexible communication options

Sensory-Friendly Environments

Collaborative Goal Setting

Respect for Stimming

Inclusive Social Practices:

Trauma-informed practices

- For a comprehensive overview of these strategies, visit [5 Neurodiversity-Affirming Practices You Need to Know](#).

About the UC/CSU California Collaborative for Neurodiversity and Learning

This collaborative brings together experts from the University of California and California State University systems with the goal of dramatically improving literacy for all children, particularly those with reading challenges such as dyslexia. Their work is founded on the principles of social justice and educational equity, aiming to empower educators and build strong readers. They offer a wealth of resources, including research insights, educational materials, and professional development opportunities, all accessible through their website.

To further their work and support parents, we are excited to share the Literacy & Dyslexia Resource Bank, developed by the UC/CSU California Collaborative for Neurodiversity and Learning. This comprehensive collection offers research-backed tools, best practices, and advocacy materials to support students with reading difficulties.

What You'll Find in the Resource Bank

 **Literacy Support Strategies** – Proven techniques for improving reading and comprehension at home.

 **Dyslexia-Friendly Learning Approaches** – Information on structured literacy, assistive technology, and accommodations.

 **Guidance for Parents & Educators** – Tips on advocating for your child's needs in school.

 **Access to Expert Research & Reports** – Learn from leading experts in literacy and neurodiversity.

You can explore these valuable resources directly at:

 [UCLA Literacy & Dyslexia Resource Bank](#)

We encourage you to take advantage of these tools and reach out if you need additional support. By working together, we can help every student develop strong literacy skills and a love for learning.

For complete information on the UC/CSU California Collaborative for Neurodiversity and Learning, please visit them [here](#).

Together, we can ensure that Da Vinci Schools remains a place where every student thrives.

For any questions or additional support, please reach out to:

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