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Date: March 12, 2020
To: Families of Santa Cruz County
Re: **All Santa Cruz County School Closure March 16 - 20, 2020**

Dear Families of Santa Cruz County,

The safety and wellness of students, families, and school personnel are the highest priorities of all Santa Cruz County schools and districts. Yesterday, we received notification of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 at Rio Del Mar Elementary School. In advance of more COVID-19 cases that are anticipated to follow, School District Superintendents and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education have decided in concurrence with the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency to **close all public Santa Cruz County schools for the week of March 16-20**. We will reassess at the end of next week whether an extension of school closures beyond March 20th will be necessary. Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer, Dr. Gail Newel, reported that while the number of cases in our county remains small at this time, the Santa Cruz County Public Health Division expects those numbers to grow significantly in the coming days and weeks which may require a continued response.

Schools will remain in session tomorrow, March 13, 2020. This will provide students an opportunity to receive direction and gather educational materials from their teachers. Our school staff will work together throughout the closure to provide the vital services and resources our schools offer to our community, including, but not limited to, free and reduced meal programs. Schools will be contacting families promptly about services available to them throughout the closure.

Several other districts in California and across the country have made similar choices, including San Francisco Unified School District, Carmel Unified School District, the state of Ohio, and the state of Maryland.

While we recognize this decision will pose challenges and hardship to many families in our county, the most effective way to slow and disrupt the transmission of this pandemic is by implementing social distancing practices. During the time of the school closure, we

are asking that students and families follow the County's Public Health Officer's directive to **stay home and minimize social contact to the extent possible**. Protecting public health requires a community-wide response, and we will need the help of families to help remain united in our response. While children have not been shown to be a high-risk group for serious illness from COVID-19, they are still able to transmit the virus to populations who are most vulnerable to serious illness, such as older adults and those with compromised immune systems. Please encourage students to avoid large public gatherings such as malls, movie theaters, and other spaces, especially those that are indoors.

We understand that implementing these changes with such limited notice is challenging and disruptive, and we appreciate your patience and cooperation. We are grateful to community members throughout our county for their tremendous efforts during these challenging times.

This is a dynamic situation where information and circumstances can evolve quickly. For the latest updates, visit the Centers for Disease Control 2019 novel coronavirus website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education continues to update its web page at www.sccoe.link/coronavirus. For ideas on how to talk to your children about COVID-19 please visit: sccoe.link/talking_about_COVID19. For local information, residents may visit www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, call 211 or text "coronavirus" to 211211.

Sincerely,

Laurie Bruton, Superintendent, San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District
Lorie Chamberland, Superintendent, Live Oak School District
Eric Gross, Superintendent, Pacific Elementary School District
Mike Heffner, Superintendent, Bonny Doon Union Elementary School District
Tanya Krause, Superintendent, Scotts Valley Unified School District
Michelle McKinny, Superintendent, Happy Valley Elementary School District
Diane Morgenstern, Superintendent, Mountain Elementary School District
Kris Munro, Superintendent, Santa Cruz City Schools
Michelle Rodriguez, Superintendent, Pajaro Valley Unified School District
Faris Sabbah, County Superintendent of Schools
Scott Turnbull, Superintendent, Soquel Union Elementary School District