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Date: April 1, 2020

To: Santa Cruz County Students and Families

Re: **Extension of School Closures Through the End of the School Year**

Dear Families of Santa Cruz County,

We recognize the significant disruption COVID-19 has caused to daily life and want you to know we are making every possible effort to continue providing support to families and communicate the most current information as it relates to our schools.

Yesterday, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond, urged all school districts and charter schools in California to remain closed and continue strengthening distance learning programs for students at this time. Superintendent Thurmond's statement emphasized that "due to the current safety concerns and needs for ongoing social distancing it currently appears that our students will not be able to return to school campuses before the end of the school year."

The health and wellness of all students, families, teachers, and staff is the first and foremost priority of all Santa Cruz County Schools. All county Superintendents with the support of Public Health Officer, Dr. Gail Newel, have collectively decided to **extend school closures through the end of the school year**. While we understand this further extension of school closures poses serious hardship to many families in Santa Cruz County, it is the most effective way to slow the transmission of this pandemic by continuing to implement social distancing practices.

Although school campuses remain closed, educators across Santa Cruz County are working around the clock to provide meals to students, deliver high-quality distance learning, and support the needs of our most vulnerable youth. We are committed to ensuring students have the resources and services they need to continue their academic progress despite the closure of our school facilities. All districts are working earnestly to provide students with the most appropriate and engaging distance learning programs.

Important steps parents can take to support their child in distance learning include, but are not limited to, checking emails often for updates from your child's school, helping them develop a new routine, creating a designated study space at home, and by scheduling breaks throughout the day.

Please visit our newly launched resources for Distance Learning site for more suggestions on how to support your child's education through school closures dlearning.santacruzcoe.org.

We understand that many students, especially high school seniors and their families, are concerned about the impact these closures will have on their academic progress and goals. We are in communication with universities, other school districts, and the County Office of Education to develop consistent protocols in relation to grades, transcripts, scholarships, graduation criteria, promotion, college applications, and commencement celebrations. These policies will be communicated out to students and families over the next several weeks. We ask for your patience as we develop these protocols.

We continue to develop and update resources that may be helpful to students and their families:

- Available Mental Health and Wellness Resources: sccoe.link/wellness
- Activity Ideas for parents: sites.google.com/pvusd.net/pvusdparentideas/home
- The Santa Cruz COE web page including an interactive map of food services distributions: www.sccoe.link/coronavirus.
- Santa Cruz County Public Health www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus
- Map of food service locations throughout the closures: sccoe.link/food_service_map
- Centers for Disease Control website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>.
- Unemployment Resources: www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/online_services.htm
- Santa Cruz County COVID-19 Call Center: (831) 454-4242 between 8 a.m. 6 p.m. Monday through Friday
- In addition, residents may visit, call 211 or text "coronavirus" to 211211.

Our students, parents, teachers, and administrators have demonstrated tremendous resilience throughout school closures due to COVID-19. We are deeply grateful to the school community of Santa Cruz County for their flexibility during this unprecedented time. We will continue to provide high-quality distance learning, support, essential resources to students and families.

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