



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY OFFICE OF
EDUCATION
DR. FARIS SABBAH • SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ms. Jane Royer Barr
Ms. Rose Filicetti
Ms. Sandra Nichols
Ms. Sue Roth
Mr. Dana M. Sales
Mr. Abel Sanchez
Mr. Bruce Van Allen

400 Encinal Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 • Tel (831) 466-5600 • Fax (831) 466-5607 • www.santacruzcoe.org

Date: April 17, 2020
To: Santa Cruz County Students and Families
Re: Preparing Grading Systems and Fiscal Impacts to Schools due to COVID-19

Dear Families of Santa Cruz County,

As the COVID-19 crisis continues to evolve, our school districts, County Office of Education, and charter schools remain focused on how we can maintain student academic progress, provide families with essential services, and prepare for the long term challenges the crisis may pose. County Superintendents are working with stakeholders to develop appropriate protocols in relation to grades, graduation criteria, and planning commencement celebrations. Each school district is prioritizing equitable educational practices within their decision-making processes and are committed to implementing grading policies **designed not to penalize students as a result of this crisis**. These policies will be communicated to families as soon as they are available.

Many families are experiencing extreme hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis, and the availability of resources and learning conditions students need at home to excel in distance learning opportunities vary greatly between households. Among other challenges, access to a computer with high speed internet is not available to nearly twenty percent of families in Santa Cruz County. The COE, school districts, the business community, and nonprofits are working on a variety of solutions to eliminate this “digital divide” in Santa Cruz County. We recognize that internet access on a computer is necessary not only for student participation in distance learning, but also for families to access critical resources to meet their basic needs and stay informed. We have called on our state legislative representatives to help advocate for emergency funding for internet access and devices to help supplement our effort to provide these vital resources to our families, and are taking all steps possible to immediately meet this need. In the meantime, we are working with Cruzio and other partners to make internet services available in public spaces. Please visit the page with resources for accessing high speed internet: sccoe.link/wifi.

As we look to the future, it is anticipated that the COVID-19 crisis will have long term impacts on our schools in regard to state funding. The Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) [reported April 5](#) that revenues for 2019-20 and 2020-21 are likely to be at least several billions of dollars lower than anticipated for January 2021. This is as a result of increased costs for direct expenses (such as funds spent on medical services) and indirect expenses (such as funds spent on unemployment benefits), as well as lower revenues from changes to the economy. This could mean the costs of maintaining the state’s existing services would exceed revenue projections and the state would face a deficit both this year and the next. Our schools, along with schools across our state, are currently preparing to address these challenges with their budgets as a result of the coronavirus emergency.

We continue to work closely with our county Public Health Officer for clarity and guidance about the criteria and timeline for reopening of schools. With the peak of coronavirus transmission in Santa Cruz County projected to take place in May, we anticipate that the shelter in place order will remain in effect

into the summer months. This week, Governor Gavin Newsom [released a framework](#) for eventually reopening the state. He described the potential accommodations that may be put in place to keep students safe once schools are reopened. These include the possibilities of staggered schedules, greater physical separation between desks, prohibitions on student congregation during meal time, and changes to gym, sports and other physical activities. It is too early to know which, if any, of these accommodations will be warranted once schools reopen.

We encourage our community to continue to utilize the following resources:

Education and other Essential Services

- Call [211](#) or text “coronavirus” to 211211
- Available Mental Health and Wellness Resources: [sccoe.link/wellness](#)
- The Santa Cruz COE web page including an interactive map of food services distributions: [www.sccoe.link/coronavirus](#)
- Map of food service locations throughout the closures: [sccoe.link/food_service_map](#)

Health Resources

- Santa Cruz County Public Health [www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus](#)
- Centers for Disease Control website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>.
- Santa Cruz County COVID-19 Call Center: [\(831\) 454-4242](#) between 8 a.m. 6 p.m. Monday through Friday

Other Resources

- Unemployment Resources: [www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/online_services.htm](#)

Our school community recognizes the significant disruption COVID-19 has caused to daily life and the livelihood for many families. We will continue to make every possible effort to provide support, guidance, and resources through this challenging time.

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