



May 8, 2020

To: Families of Santa Cruz County

Re: Framework for Reopening Schools

Dear Families of Santa Cruz County,

Santa Cruz County School Superintendents have begun developing a framework to help schools prepare for a variety of public health restrictions that may be required when it comes time to reopen school this fall. The framework sets forth a continuum of restrictive school environments ranging from highly restrictive, moderately restrictive, least restrictive, and combinations of those distinct possibilities that may be necessary when school campuses re-open to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our community. The framework is divided into five focus areas to help guide our reopening plans: Health and Safety, Instructional Programs, Student Support, Family Engagement and Support, and Operations. Planning committees representing school districts and charter schools in the county are being assembled to work on each of these areas. Schools and districts in Santa Cruz County vary in size, funding, and needs of their school population. The framework we are developing will account for these differences.

All ten district Superintendents are committed to developing reopening plans that are guided by the following key principles:

- Keeping students and staff safe and healthy
- Engaging important school stakeholders such as students, parents, and staff, including bargaining unit members
- Providing flexibility to accommodate the unique needs of districts, schools, teachers, and families
- Ensuring access and equitable educational practices for all students in Santa Cruz County
- Provide an engaging learning environment that supports the acceleration and not remediation

If social distancing practices are still required when public health authorities permit schools to begin reopening, it is likely that schools will need significantly more funding to properly implement new systems necessary to keep students safe and on-track with their academic progress. This comes at a time when schools are being instructed to brace for unprecedented financial losses. Governor Newsom's financial advisors estimate that the total state revenue losses from the health pandemic will amount to \$41.2 billion. For comparison, when the financial crisis hit in December 2008, early state revenue losses were estimated at \$28 billion. This could result in devastating cuts of up to 22% of California's school budget for 2020-21. We are taking all possible action to communicate the needs of Santa Cruz County schools to our state legislators to advocate for the protection of education funding and provide schools with as much flexibility as possible to weather the impending financial storm.

The challenges we are facing in no way diminish the excitement we have for our students who will be promoting or graduating this June. So many of our students have worked exceptionally hard this year and have demonstrated remarkable resilience despite the major disruption to their academic program and social-emotional lives. Our school districts are working with their school communities to finalize commencement plans that are approved by our local Public Health Officer as safe to make these celebrations as special, fun, and memorable as possible.

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