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Date: May 29, 2020

To: Families of Santa Cruz County

Re: **May 26th Public Health Order, Education Funding, and Legislative Advocacy**

Dear Families of Santa Cruz County,

On May 26th, Santa Cruz County public health authorities released a [new public health order](#) modifying prior local shelter-in-place orders to allow certain businesses and activities, such as in-store retail, churches, and office workspaces to resume so long as they can operate in compliance with ongoing social distancing protocols. For now, our schools remain closed. Gatherings outside of one's household, gatherings violating safe social distance protocols, and all non-essential travel remain prohibited by this Order. Businesses are strongly encouraged to continue to carry out work from home if possible. Transmission of COVID-19 continues to pose a serious risk in our community if the guidelines set forth in this Order are not complied with. For more information and [frequently asked questions](#) about the May 26th Order, please visit [santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus](http://santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus).

All Santa Cruz County School District Superintendents and Charter School Leaders are currently working together and within their organizations to develop plans to help prepare for a range of circumstances schools may face once public health authorities deem it safe to re-open schools. In order to meet health and safety requirements, schools may need to implement smaller class sizes, create different schedules, increase sanitization of school facilities, hire more staff, and make many other changes that will incur significant costs to schools.

Earlier this month, Governor Newsom's May Budget Revision revised the state budget to include a 10% reduction to California public school funding caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety of students, families, and school staff will continue to be the highest priority of school leaders as we work to determine the safest methods to reintegrate back into classes on school campuses. We are deeply concerned that these budget cuts will not allow us to safely reopen our schools in the Fall.

The Governor's proposed 10% reduction is equivalent to losing \$1,230 per student. These financial losses will strip districts of the resources needed to re-open schools. The Governor's proposal also makes reductions to critical school services, such as Career and Technical Education programs, Adult Education, food services, child care providers' ability to offer subsidized care, and additional cuts to early childhood, health and child welfare.

California school leaders, educators, administrators, and classified staff are deeply concerned about the current financial crisis and are working together as a coalition to advocate for the protection of education funding. The current focus of this coalition is to oppose the Governor's proposed cuts to education and urge state legislators to secure alternative revenue sources to help fund the critical expenses schools will need to safely reopen schools in a manner that complies with health authorities.

California public schools need our state's legislators to provide temporary flexibility to schools in how attendance is counted and instructional time requirements. Current education law does allow schools to receive funding from a combination of classroom-based and distance-learning environments, which will likely be how education must be delivered for some time. Further, schools would need to be granted a hold harmless agreement so that they are not penalized for fluctuations in funding as a result of the pandemic.

School leaders and School Board members throughout Santa Cruz County will be working diligently to help advocate for the protection of education funding and necessary changes to school attendance and instructional regulations by passing resolutions in support of state and federal financial assistance for schools and communicating directly with the offices of our California and U.S. representatives. Parents and community members can join in this effort by calling, emailing, and writing letters to our state representatives to call on their support. Now more than ever, we need to stand with our students by advocating for the investment in public education. Thank you for your support of our students and schools.

#### **Additional Information**

For the latest updates on the coronavirus pandemic, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>. In addition, you can also call 211 or text "coronavirus" to 211211. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education continues to update its web page and resources at [www.sccoe.link/coronavirus](http://www.sccoe.link/coronavirus).

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