

Dear SCCS Families and Staff,

Today, I am writing to update you on our reopening plans for the 2020-21 school year. Over the past months, our district leadership team has worked with community stakeholders to prepare for a safe reopening of school. Through early July, we remained optimistic: a significant number of parents felt ready to send their children back to the physical classrooms, teachers were excited to welcome their students, and local health data looked promising.

As we have experienced all spring, conditions and information change quickly. Last Wednesday, County Superintendents made a recommendation that we open schools in distance learning if county COVID-19 cases continue to rise and our county is placed on the state watch list. On Friday, Governor Newsom made our recommendation official stating that counties on the state's COVID-19 monitoring list cannot reopen schools for in-person learning. As of today, Santa Cruz County is officially on the monitoring list. **Therefore, Santa Cruz City Schools will open with distance learning for all students on August 12th.**

We recognize that continuing with Distance Learning will cause hardship for many families. We miss our students and want them back on campus with their teachers and classmates. However, the health and safety of our students and staff are our top priority.

Distance Learning will differ from last spring. Parents can expect a robust program including the following:

- There will be set school hours and schedules for each student to follow.
- Students will check in daily and attendance will be taken.
- Students will be graded and assessed.
- There will be daily live interaction between teachers and students.
- Staff will provide age appropriate student training at the start of the year to become capable Distance Learners.
- Parent education will be provided to help parents participate in the education of their children.
- We will provide support for students performing below grade level, English learner students, and students with disabilities.
- We have more Chromebooks to support students, so each student can have their own device.
- We will hold virtual Back to School Nights and New Parent Orientations.
- We will resume on-campus meal assistance on the first day of school.

In process right now:

- We are developing a parent thought exchange regarding distance learning experiences from last spring. We expect to email the thought exchange to parents early next week.

- We will seek ongoing stakeholder input from staff leadership teams, District Parent Leaders Group (parent leads of PTA, HSC, SSC, ELAC and Sports Boosters), District English Learner Advisory Committee (parents and teachers), and our Reopening Advisory Committee.
- There have been a number of professional development opportunities offered through the summer to support teachers and we are planning additional professional development in August around quality instruction in a distance learning format.
- We are acquiring new technology tools (software and hardware) based on learnings from last spring that will enhance distance learning.
- We will have ongoing teacher collaboration and planning.
- We will be training teachers on implementing best practices for synchronous (in-person) and asynchronous lesson design and delivery.
- We will continue ongoing planning for the phase-in return of students back to campus when it is safe to do so per available resources and state and county health guidelines.
- We are updating our SCCS Reopening of Schools Plan found on the district website at www.sccs.net
- We will be disseminating and updating a Frequently Asked Questions resource document linked here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sc8-1rfp8B9y04-CqD1lobkkldRPJ6Qc/view?usp=sharing>

This is not how anyone in education wants to start the new school year. Please know that we are committed to doing everything possible to support students and families with distance learning, and we will continue to prepare for a safe reopening as soon as possible.

I want to thank parents and staff who have reached out with your thoughts, concerns, and opinions about the opening of school. The feedback you have shared, the positive attitude so many of you have, and your caring for our staff are greatly appreciated and valued.

Look for ongoing communication as we approach the start of school. Please be safe and well.

Best regards,

Kris Munro

Superintendent