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Dear SCCS Families,

As we are completing the eighth week of distance learning, I hope that you and your family are healthy and managing the complexities of sheltering in place.

I want to thank everyone who participated in our "Thought Exchange" on reopening schools. 4,356 members of our community participated in the exchange. Our stakeholders shared a wide variety of thoughts and considerations about reopening school. We will use this input as we develop plans for August. Look for more details on the exchange results on our website next week.

Today, I am writing to you about two significant challenges facing our school district -- 1) designing a way to safely reopen our schools and 2) addressing significant budget reductions resulting from the state economic crisis created by the pandemic.

School Reopening and State Funding -- What We Know (And Don't Know)

There are many unknowns that are shaping our daily lives. One of those is the unknown of how the COVID-19 virus will progress through the summer months. Currently, based on models, a second peak of infections is expected around late November, but even that is uncertain. All of us in TK-12 public education are grappling with this uncertainty.

So here's what we know and what we do not know in Santa Cruz City Schools:

What we know:

- We know that we need to provide a continuum of reopening scenarios. In partnership with partner districts and the County Office of Education, we are developing scenarios for reopening schools with severe restrictions, moderate restrictions, and light restrictions.
- We know that families should be prepared for the possibility of an abrupt shift to remote learning and work if a second shelter in place order is issued. !
- We know that our Curriculum & Instruction Team is investigating tools to support hybrid and distance learning structures.
- We know that our Student Services team and counselors are providing support to students and families, and they are working to identify social emotional supports and needs to address before and after reopening schools.
- We know that when we open up for in-person instruction that some families will still want to be able to choose online learning options, and we are preparing options to address this need.
- We know that the state is in a fiscal crisis. The Department of Finance is suggesting that we could see up to a 22% reduction in funding. The Legislative Analyst's Office recommends preparing for a 10% reduction. For reference, 10% of our general fund budget is over \$7 million dollars. During the

Great Recession, we experienced a 19% reduction over a multiple year period that grew to 22% in 2012-13.

- We know that we have a talented staff of people who are dedicated to the well-being and education of children, no matter¹⁵ the circumstances.
- We know that we have wonderful students and families who are engaged partners in our learning communities.

What we do not know:

- We do not know all the conditions that need to be in place for schools to reopen.
- We do not know when the shelter in place restrictions will be lifted, or for how long.
- We do not know which school scenarios (most restrictive, moderate restrictions or low restrictions) will be implemented until late July or early August.
- We do not know the full certainty of how much the economic downturn will shift our budget planning assumptions. With the shift of tax deadlines from April to July, the state does not have revenue numbers. For now, we will plan for between 2% and 10% reductions. In August, we will be provided new targets and may face mid-year reductions.
- We do not know if the magnitude of those cuts will worsen based on tax revenue shortfalls at the state level.
- We do not know when the economy will bounce back, or how quickly.

Dealing with uncertainty is one of the most difficult components of our current reality. It will require grace, patience and flexibility as we work to define our future. The commitment that our staff and I make to you is to be open to ideas, to involve all stakeholders in our planning, to remain flexible and adaptable, and to support everyone in our collective effort to meet student needs and to keep students and staff safe. We need to be mindful that deep budget reductions will impact everyone in our learning communities, and we will keep student success and core student services in our forefront as we plan for the future.

The challenges that we are facing are new and we don't have many models to reference. Thank you for partnering with us as we work to find solutions together.

Best regards,
Kris Munro
Superintendent