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Date: February 12, 2021
To: School Community of Santa Cruz County
Re: **Phased Reopening of Schools and Vaccine Partnership**

Dear Community of Santa Cruz County Schools,

We are excited to announce that Santa Cruz County school districts are working with their labor partners to plan for the phased reopening of our elementary schools beginning of March and April. Our bargaining unit partners have agreed that staff will resume in-person instruction after their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Through a crucial partnership with Dominican Hospital and Dignity Health, we have secured vaccinations for most of our kinder and preschool teaching and support staff which will allow schools to begin phasing-in expansion of in-person services for small cohorts of these student groups first. Schools will continue to help vaccinate both instructional and support staff beginning with the lowest grade levels proceeding in order through the higher grades.

Vaccination is an important part of a multi-faceted plan to expand in-person services to most students. We continue to be actively engaged in our advocacy efforts to keep educators as a top priority in the County's vaccination effort. We believe wholeheartedly that COVID-19 vaccination represents an important tool to help stop the pandemic and to bring our students back to the classrooms as quickly and as safely as possible. We hope to help vaccinate our entire education community which is composed of all childcare and early childhood educators, TK-12 public and private school personnel, and Cabrillo College employees as soon as possible.

According to [CDPH guidance](#), our elementary schools (which consist of grades TK through 6th) became eligible to resume plans for in-person hybrid instruction once our county's COVID-19 adjusted rate dropped below 25. At this time, our county's [adjusted case rate is 18.8](#). Middle Schools and High Schools are not able to implement hybrid instruction until our county's COVID-19 adjusted rate drops below 7.

Schools have worked diligently over the past year to develop readiness systems in anticipation of expanding in-person instruction, including the implementation of a variety of new prevention protocols, safety training, COVID-19 surveillance testing for all school personnel. Schools have also made environmental modifications to sites in order to minimize the risks to our students, parents, and staff. Now, with the methodical vaccination of school instructional staff, we are confident that the robust mitigation systems we have put in place will continue to minimize the risks and ensure in-person learning spaces remain as safe as possible in order to welcome our students back to classrooms. We continue to closely monitor COVID-19 guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and our

local public health authorities and integrate changes in protocols as they pertain to schools into our [COVID-19 Health Guidance for Schools framework](#).

To continue to make progress in overcoming the pandemic, as a community we must all continue doing our part by complying with all recommended preventative measures including staying home as much as possible, wearing face coverings in public, maintaining physical distancing and avoiding gatherings with those outside our household. We look forward to sharing more about plans to bring our students back safely to our classrooms and schools as new information becomes available. For more information about COVID-19 updates for schools, please visit our webpage at santacruzcoe.org/coronavirus.

Yours in education and health,

Laurie Bruton, Superintendent, San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District
Lorie Chamberland, Superintendent, Live Oak School District
Alicia Doolittle, Administrative Director, Linscott Charter School
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
Jennifer Proudfoot, Director/Principal, Tierra Pacifica Charter School
Maria Reitano, Head of School, Pacific Collegiate School
Josh Ripp, Head of School, Ceiba College Preparatory Academy
Michelle Rodriguez, Superintendent, Pajaro Valley Unified School District
Faris Sabbah, County Superintendent of Schools
Scott Turnbull, Superintendent, Soquel Union Elementary School District