

Dear SCCS Families,

Today, I am forwarding an email from all of the County Superintendents with important information on student vaccines, as well as a statement on this week's verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial and resources to support talking with your children to help let them into a conversation that has underscored this last year.

As educators, we know the supreme importance of fairness in the classroom. We all ask children to have faith in honesty, in fairness and in justice. And each time children witness adults act against what is fair, what is honest, and what is just, it does lasting damage to the hope, energy and vision they bring forward.

Just over a year ago, when the murder of George Floyd left our nation reeling in anger and forced our attention back onto generational inequities embedded in our society, Santa Cruz City Schools sought to expand our continuing work making these issues prominent in our curriculum, our conversation and our students' experience. We have also created and nurtured a channel through which students' voices and concerns can be amplified and shared.

We established the Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee on Race & Equity, made up of middle and high school student volunteers, to give the student body agency and voice in our policies for identifying and addressing inequity of experience. Our teachers have worked with each other to expand curriculum on civil rights & ethnic studies, to ensure that these conversations are happening at every level.

But most importantly, we recognize that all we have done is a beginning, not an end, to our work of delivering inclusion and equality. As we, as a nation, allow ourselves some relief in the knowledge that justice has followed the outrage of murder, we also acknowledge together that it is not an end to injustice. Justice does not undo hurt, but it helps the healing process. And at Santa Cruz City Schools, justice remains both the goal and the method of our work to improve the experience of our students and the health of our community.

Best regards,

Kris Munro
Superintendent

Date: April 21, 2021

To: Families of Santa Cruz County

Re: Students Return to Classrooms; Voluntary Student Vaccines Available, and Landmark Court Decision

Dear Families of Santa Cruz County,

Santa Cruz County schools are excited to welcome more students back to classrooms for in-person learning. According to a [report published by the CDC](#), in-person instruction does not pose a major risk of COVID-19 to children as long as they continue to wear face coverings and maintain adequate physical distance between themselves and others. Santa Cruz County schools are working to ensure COVID-19 transmission at schools remains low by supporting our students to practice these proven prevention strategies, diligently following our [Health Guidance for Schools](#), not sending students with symptoms to school and continuing to closely monitor recommended changes in guidance from our local and state public health authorities.

We are proud to support our school community's vaccination efforts in partnership with Santa Cruz County Public Health, Dominican Hospital, Dignity Health, Safeway, and Salud Para La Gente by providing COVID-19 vaccination [clinics for students ages 16-18 years old](#). **Getting a vaccine is free and completely**

voluntary - students will not be required to be vaccinated and vaccination requires informed adult/parental consent. Our vaccination clinics are only administering Pfizer vaccines and have the capacity to serve 1800 students this week. We hope to continue providing this service until all students ages 16 and older have been offered the opportunity to get vaccinated. Families can expect to receive emails from their child's school or district inviting them to sign up and register for a vaccine appointment. We are committed to ensure that all families and students have access to vaccination regardless of income level, zip code, immigration status, and/or whether they have health insurance or not. We are aware that approval of vaccination for students ages 12 to 15 is currently under consideration by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Once approval is secured, we hope to work with our partners to develop clinics to offer vaccination to this age group with informed parental consent. Each school district is hosting a clinic.

Although we are excited and optimistically hopeful that the pandemic will continue to subside as more people become vaccinated, it's important that we all keep doing our part to practice all recommended prevention strategies for as long as our local and state public health authorities instruct us to do so. John Hopkins Medicine expects that when "enough people are protected from the coronavirus, the risk of infection for your child — and the population in general — will begin to decline, even before vaccines are available for children." Vaccines, in addition to mask-wearing, cleaning/disinfecting, quarantining/isolation protocols, physical distancing, and other precautions will help ensure that your child's return to school, sports and other group activities remain safe as we continue to expand in-person educational programs for students.

Finally, as we celebrate the continued expansion of in-person learning after a challenging year, our county is also reacting alongside the rest of our nation to the landmark guilty verdict in the murder of George Floyd—a senseless cruelty that made 2020 not only a year of isolation and uncertainty, but a year of protest, social introspection and historic confrontation of institutionalized racism.

As a county, our superintendents and school districts stand together against injustice, hold zero tolerance for hate, and seek every day to identify, address and dismantle the systems of inequality that keep our students from the opportunity which is their right in our society.

We know that for every scrutinized and public example of injustice, there are countless more every day that are not debated, denounced or defended against. As educators, we work to help all of our students better understand the experience of all people. We teach students about our nation's history of progress, as well of its history of injustice. We work with students to understand and trust the power of their own voices.

We know that while vital, these are not always easy conversations to have with children, so we encourage you to take the time and include them in this conversation. To help, we are sharing some resources:

- [A Kids Book About Racism by Jelani Memory](#)
- [Talking to children after racial incidents | Penn GSE](#)
- [How to talk to kids about racism, racial violence and police brutality](#)
- [Anti-Racism For Kids 101: Starting To Talk About Race](#)
- www.tolerance.org
- [10 Children's Books that Help Kids Understand What Children of Color are Up Against](#)
- [NPR Talking about Race with Young Children](#)
- [Beyond the Golden Rule: A Parent's Guide to Preventing and Responding to Racial Injustice](#)

We know injustice addressed is a powerful step. But we also know the road does not end until all injustice is behind.

Yours in education and equity,

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
Maria Reitano, Head of School, Pacific Collegiate School
Michelle Rodriguez, Superintendent, Pajaro Valley Unified School District
Faris Sabbah, County Superintendent of Schools
Scott Turnbull, Superintendent, Soquel Union Elementary School District