



San Benito County Office of Education

Krystal Lomanto, County Superintendent of Schools

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April 1, 2020

Dear families of San Benito County,

The San Benito County Office of Education and San Benito County District Superintendents are providing an important update on school facility closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 31, 2020 the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond released information to county superintendents that stated, "Due to the current safety concerns and needs for ongoing social distancing it currently appears that our students will not be able to return to school campuses before the end of the school year. This is in no way to suggest that school is over for the year, but rather we should put all efforts into strengthening our delivery of education through distance learning." Superintendent Thurmond urged all school districts in California to move towards and/or continue to strengthen distance learning programs and opportunities for students at this time.

With this new information and an abundance of caution the San Benito County Office of Education and District Superintendents are taking a safety-first approach and are recommending extending the school facility closures through the end of the school year. The 2019-20 school year is not over, and we will continue to utilize distance learning to provide educational continuity. We ask for patience and understanding as we are all quickly transitioning into a new way of teaching and learning to meet the health and safety impacts of COVID-19.

While we recognize this extension of school facility closures poses challenges and hardship to many families in San Benito County, the most effective way to slow and disrupt the transmission of this pandemic is by continuing to implement social distancing practices. We are grateful to our community members throughout our county for their tremendous efforts during these challenging times. As we are seeing an *increase* of COVID-19 cases in San Benito County, we are *strongly* recommending that students and families follow the County's Public Health Officer's directive to **stay home, wash hands, and practice social distancing.** **On March 31, Dr. Fenstersheib from Public Health extended a more restrictive shelter in place order. We are asking that if you have to go to the store for necessities, that you send one person and not the entire family. We are making this strong recommendation as the COVID-19 cases are increasing in San Benito County. The only way to prevent the spread of COVID-19, is to stay home, only go out when necessary, social distant (6 feet apart), and wash your hands often.**

Sincerely,

Krystal Lomanto, County Superintendent of Schools

Michele Huntoon, Aromas San Juan Unified School District Superintendent

Candace Brewen, Bitterwater-Tully Elementary School District Superintendent/Principal

Nancy MacLean, Cienega Elementary School District Principal/Teacher

Kevin Sved, Navigator Charter School Chief Executive Officer

Diego Ochoa, Hollister School District Superintendent
Elizabeth Volmer, Jefferson Elementary School District Principal/Teacher
Jennifer Bernosky, North County Joint Union School District Superintendent/Principal
Amanda McCraw, Panoche Elementary School District Principal/Teacher
Shawn Tennenbaum, San Benito High School Superintendent
John Schilling, Southside Elementary School District Superintendent/Principal
Bronson Mendes-Lobue, Tres Pinos Elementary School District Superintendent/Principal
Linda Smith, Willow Grove Elementary School District