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400 Encinal Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 ♦ Tel (831) 466-5600 ♦ Fax (831) 466-5607 ♦ [www.santacruzcoe.org](http://www.santacruzcoe.org)

August 21, 2020

To: Families of Santa Cruz County

Re: **Standing in Solidarity with our Community Regarding Fires**

Dear Families of Santa Cruz County,

We are deeply saddened by the devastating effects that the Lightning Complex Fire is having on our community, especially in the midst of a pandemic. The education community stands together in unity and solidarity with every person impacted by this tragedy. Our hearts go out to all of those who have been displaced - many who await to hear whether their homes are still standing. Our community's safety is the most important aspect of all crises. As this disastrous event continues to unfold, every district and charter school in Santa Cruz County is working closely with our County's emergency operations team to mobilize all the resources at our disposal to support students, staff, and families with emergency shelters, temporary housing, food, mental health support, and more.

Several districts and charter schools have made the decision to suspend instructional programs as a result of this dynamic situation. Families can expect to hear from their school district about the status of their child's school and what services will be provided to them. In making the determination of whether to close schools, individual school districts are taking into account multiple metrics that include

- Air quality
- Number of staff impacted by evacuations
- Number of students who are unable to access their learning program
- If school campus is within an evacuation zones
- Power outages
- Impact of closure on feeder school districts

Conditions of this fire are emerging rapidly, and it is important that we all use the resources available to us to remain alert and informed. We will continue to post updates and resources on our Santa Cruz COE webpage at [www.santacruzcoe.org/wildfires](http://www.santacruzcoe.org/wildfires). Please connect yourself with the following resources so that you'll be able to receive important updates:

- Sign up for [CodeRed Santa Cruz Regional 911](#) to receive alerts from our local emergency response teams
- [View CAL Fire San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit's latest evacuation warnings and orders here](#) and [sign up for email alerts](#)
- View our [current map of Evacuation Warnings and Orders](#)
- [Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Facebook](#)
- [Santa Cruz County Emergency Services Twitter](#)
- Evacuees should first attempt seeking shelter with friends and family. For assistance with evacuation accommodations, call [211](#) or Red Cross at 1-866-272-2237
- Contact the [Santa Cruz County Animal Services Agency](#) for assistance with evacuating pets and livestock
- [Database of local hotels](#) with capacity for evacuees
- [Up-to-date list of road closures](#)
- [Red Cross Wildfire Safety Preparation](#)
- [Fire Evacuation Checklist](#)

Our community continues to inspire us with its resilience in these dire times. When this fire struck, our community immediately took action with generosity and willingness to support each other. Many school employees and community members have pivoted to help serve as Disaster Service Workers to staff shelters and distribute supplies to those in need. In the days to come, we ask that you consider how you might be able to join us to support those who have been directly impacted by the fire. If you would like to give a monetary donation at this time, we recommend donating to the [CFSCC Fire Response Fund](#).

Santa Cruz County schools are committed to supporting our community through this crisis. Please stay safe, informed, and alert.

In community,

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  
 Michelle Rodriguez, Superintendent, Pajaro Valley Unified School District  
 Faris Sabbah, County Superintendent of Schools  
 Scott Turnbull, Superintendent, Soquel Union Elementary School District