



SANTA CRUZ
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Date: October 1, 2021

To: Families of Santa Cruz County

Re: COVID-19 mitigation strategies, dashboards, preparing for additional vaccinations

Dear Families of Santa Cruz County,

COVID-19 transmission numbers are continuing to trend downward in our community. However, as we increase the number of students getting tested throughout Santa Cruz County, we continue to see positive cases in our schools. They are a reminder that we must not grow complacent — and our COVID-19 mitigation efforts must continue apace.

In an effort to keep our community informed, we would like to share the following important updates:

- **Masking in Schools:** Santa Cruz County's indoor masking mandate was lifted this week after the county moved to the CDC's moderate ("yellow") transmission level. However, [statewide requirements](#) from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) **still require all K-12 students to mask indoors**. Adults in K-12 school settings are required to mask when sharing indoor spaces with students. CDPH has stated it will re-evaluate those guidelines by November 1.
- **Testing dashboard:** Transparency and data-driven decision-making are core values for our schools, and we are pleased to announce the launch of a COVID-19 testing dashboard offering the most comprehensive snapshot of COVID-19 surveillance in our schools to date. Available at santacruzcoe.org/coviddashboards, it includes results of more than 20,000 tests of students and school staff from all conventional public schools and many charter and private schools gathered through our testing partnership with Inspire Diagnostics. The page also contains links to dashboards for each district. The testing data suggests our mitigation measures have proven effective. The overall positivity rate reflected in the testing data is significantly lower than the positivity rate for the county as a whole, as has been cited by Santa Cruz County health officials, indicating our mitigation measures are proving effective.
- **Preparing for vaccination of 5-11 year olds:** We are anticipating the FDA will grant an Emergency Use Authorization allowing the Pfizer vaccine to be administered to children ages 5-11 by the end of October. This would come as a welcome step that will allow us to significantly strengthen our schools' resiliency to COVID-19 transmission. We are working with health providers to ensure we

are ready to offer vaccination for students once they are authorized by the FDA. Once established, we will be sharing times, locations, and procedures with families for vaccination clinics at schools and other convenient locations.

- **Governor's Announcement:** Today, Governor Newsom announced plans to require COVID-19 vaccination for all students once they are fully authorized by the FDA. We do not anticipate these requirements to go into effect before July of 2022. Parents are encouraged to visit myturn.ca.gov to find vaccination locations for anyone 12 and over who is not yet vaccinated.

Our success in keeping our schools open and our students healthy are the result of a massive effort by our school community and our partners to follow CDPH requirements, vaccination, testing, and other mitigation strategies. Inspire Diagnostics, our county's Public Health officials, and all families and staff have our enduring gratitude for their commitment to the wellbeing of our students and staff.

Yours in education and equity,

Eric Gross, Superintendent, Pacific Elementary School District
Mike Heffner, Superintendent, Bonny Doon Union Elementary School District
Tanya Krause, Superintendent, Scotts Valley Unified School District
Daisy Morales, Superintendent, Live Oak School District
Kris Munro, Superintendent, Santa Cruz City Schools
Michelle Rodriguez, Superintendent, Pajaro Valley Unified School District
Faris Sabbah, County Superintendent of Schools
Chris Schiermeyer, Superintendent, San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District
Michelle Stewart, Superintendent, Happy Valley Elementary School District
Megan Tresham, Superintendent, Mountain Elementary School District
Scott Turnbull, Superintendent, Soquel Union Elementary School District