



# Santa Barbara County Education Office

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Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent of Schools

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February 4, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California  
1303 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

We are writing today to thank you for your unwavering support of schools by prioritizing education and childcare workers in Phase 1B Tier 1 of the state's COVID-19 vaccination distribution plan and ask for your unyielding commitment to returning to in-person instruction for all students and staff as safely and quickly as possible.

**Vaccines for education and childcare employees a top priority:**

We have all been working closely with Santa Barbara County Public Health on school reopening plans by implementing multiple layers of protective measures such as physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, surveillance testing, minimizing mixing of groups, and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). However, vaccination remains a critical component to supporting our collective goal to serve and support all students in person as soon as possible.

While we recognize the state does not control the vaccine supply and distribution, the state is responsible for a coordinated statewide approach. Keeping vaccination of education and childcare workers a top priority will accelerate in-person instruction for our students, a critical component in addressing inequities and learning gaps, and supporting the significant mental wellness needs that are best served in-person.

We are ready to partner with the State of California, BlueShield, and will continue to work alongside Santa Barbara County Public Health in the efforts to vaccinate education and childcare staff in this next tier, along with those age 65 and over. We offer our assistance in providing venues for vaccination and personnel to support the vaccinations of this critical group of public servants.

**Equitable paths for in-person instruction:**

Santa Barbara County's education and childcare leaders are committed to providing a safe and healthy in-person educational environment. Ten of our 20 school districts and over half of our site-based charter schools are currently open for in-person instruction.

In some areas of Santa Barbara County, we have districts next to each other, where one district is open and the other is not. In other areas of our county, positive cases have exceeded others. We all strive for equity and the opportunity to provide in-person instruction for all students, across all socioeconomic backgrounds.

It is difficult to justify how students in one area of our county, in some cases next door to districts offering in-person instruction, are not afforded the benefit of in-person instruction. We realize opening schools for in-person instruction may take different paths; each of our districts and communities are unique in their needs and in the resources they have available to them. Providing structures that enable them to open for in-person instruction should be of the utmost priority.

Equity has so often guided your decisions and we implore you to provide an achievable path forward for all of California's youth. Thank you for your support of education.

Sincerely,



Dr. Susan Salcido  
Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools

In partnership with all Santa Barbara County School District Superintendents  
and Site-Based Charter School Directors:

David Bautista, Adelante Charter School  
Allan Pelletier, Ballard School District  
Doug Brown, Blochman Union School District  
Dr. Randal Haggard, Buellton Union School District  
Diana Rigby, Carpinteria Unified School District  
Dr. Amy Alzina, Cold Spring School District  
Maurene Donner, College School District  
Alfonso Gamino, Cuyama Joint Unified School District  
Dr. Donna Lewis, Goleta Union School District  
Dr. Emilio Handall, Guadalupe Union School District  
Dr. Anne Hubbard, Hope School District  
Trevor McDonald, Lompoc Unified School District  
Ray Vazquez, Los Olivos School District

Suzanne Nicastro, Manzanita Public Charter School  
Anthony Ranii, Montecito Union School District  
Dr. Holly Edds, Orcutt Union School District  
Demian Barnett, Peabody Charter School  
Laura Donner, Santa Barbara Charter School  
Hilda Maldonado, Santa Barbara Unified School District  
Luke Ontiveros, Santa Maria-Bonita School District  
Antonio Garcia, Santa Maria Joint Union High School District  
Dr. John Dewey, Santa Ynez Valley Charter School  
Scott Cory, Santa Ynez Valley Union High School District  
Dr. Steve Seaford, Solvang School District  
Dr. Lois Peterson, Vista del Mar Union School District

cc: State Senator Monique Limón  
State Assemblymember Steve Bennett  
State Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham  
Dr. Van Do-Reynoso, Director, Santa Barbara County Public Health Department