



September 16, 2020

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SAN JOSE UNIFIED TO CONTINUE DISTANCE LEARNING THROUGH  
DECEMBER**

*County prohibition on indoor gatherings and strong community support for consistency were key contributors to the decision*

*San José, CA, September 16, 2020* – Today, San José Unified announced it will continue distance learning for all students through December 31, 2020. The announcement comes after Santa Clara County moved into the Red Tier on California's new [COVID-19 blueprint](#), allowing K-12 schools to reopen at full capacity once the County has remained in the Red Tier for two weeks.

The County continues to prohibit indoor dining, indoor movies, and indoor gatherings through its [Risk Reduction Order](#). These restrictions do not apply to K-12 schools, even though school classrooms are essentially indoor gatherings.

"We believe our schools should be a reflection of our community," said Nancy Albarrán, Superintendent. "While we believe in-person instruction is the best option for our students, we cannot ignore the data on viral transmission in Santa Clara County and potentially compromise the health and safety of our students, families, and staff by bringing students back at this time."

The COVID-19 new case count in Santa Clara County continues to rise and exceeds the new case count in March 2020, when schools were initially ordered to close. [57% of the cases](#) in the County are attributed to an unknown origin, meaning the community spread continues to be significant, despite the overall progress that has been made in slowing the spread of the virus. The new case count in San José is also [higher than other cities](#) in the county. Today, the Santa Clara County Public Health Officer issued an [enhanced testing order](#) that tightens requirements for large healthcare providers to provide easily accessible testing for residents of Santa Clara County to continue the county's positive trend in COVID-19 cases.

"Schools must be able to rely on adequate and rapid testing in order to safely reopen," said Katie Rodriguez, R.N., Manager of Health and Family Support Programs. "Today's enhanced testing order is a positive step towards being ready to safely reopen our schools."

San José Unified recently completed a survey of parents, students, and employees and found that all groups strongly prefer a commitment to a plan that would remain consistent through at least the end of the semester. "We know that consistency is critical to our families," said Jodi Lax, Associate Superintendent of Instruction. "We absolutely recognize that in-person learning is the ideal experience for students and teachers and want to welcome students back to campuses when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we are continuing to use community feedback to improve the distance learning experience for our students and teachers."

San José Unified will continue to monitor the health information and guidance from local and state officials and will announce plans for the second semester in early December 2020.