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## **Statement from County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Mary Ann Dewan, on Return To School from Winter Break**

Dear Santa Clara County Families and Communities,

As we return to school amid growing COVID-19 cases across the country, we are reminded of the importance of using multiple layers of risk mitigation strategies to protect our community and maintain in-person learning at schools. We continue to work in partnership with the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, the California Department of Public Health, the California Department of Education and the Governor's Office as circumstances around the pandemic evolve.

The health and safety of our students, staff, and families remains our top priority and our schools are committed to healthy environments for our students and our staff. Schools throughout Santa Clara County have been working diligently to ensure the safest return to classrooms after winter break.

The Santa Clara County Office of Education received over 250,000 in-home rapid antigen tests from California to distribute to public schools. Schools have expanded their testing plans and some have already begun to distribute at-home tests to families while some schools may also choose to distribute at-home tests during the first week back to school.

It remains critically important to use all of the proven layers of protection - masking, vaccinations, booster shots for those eligible, testing, and remaining home when sick to prevent further spread. Parents are encouraged to test their children before returning to the classroom after winter break using rapid antigen home testing kits if available or using other testing resources available at schools or in the community. More information about available testing resources can be found at [www.sccfreetest.org](http://www.sccfreetest.org).

Despite this latest surge, we know that we have collectively made great progress since the school year began. And, to best protect full-time, in-person instruction we need to remain diligent in our efforts to adhere to safety protocols.

Vaccination rates in Santa Clara County are among the highest in the state. Sixty-one (61) percent of our children in the 5-17 age group in Santa Clara County have been vaccinated, many of them at clinics that have been hosted at our school sites. If your child has not yet been vaccinated, please schedule an appointment as soon as possible. There is no impact on immigration status and health insurance is not needed. Find an appointment at [www.sccfreevax.org](http://www.sccfreevax.org). Everyone who is eligible for the booster should get it as soon as possible. Currently, persons 16 years of age and older are eligible for the booster - over 54% of eligible Santa Clara County residents have been boosted.

We understand this is a time of uncertainty and concern. As the pandemic continues to evolve, we will work together to keep our students, staff, and families safe. We appreciate your continued support, partnership, and understanding.

Be well,



Dr. Mary Ann Dewan  
County Superintendent of Schools

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*About the Santa Clara County Office of Education*

*Working collaboratively with school and community partners, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) is a regional service agency that provides instructional, business, and technology services to the 31 school districts of Santa Clara County. The County Office of Education directly serves students through special education programs, alternative schools, Head Start and State Preschool programs, migrant education, and Opportunity Youth Academy. The SCCOE also provides academic and fiscal oversight and monitoring to districts in addition to the 22 Santa Clara County Board of Education authorized charter schools.*

*For more information about the Santa Clara County Office of Education, please visit [www.sccoe.org](http://www.sccoe.org) and follow us @SCCOE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).*