May 10, 2020

Dear Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors,

On May 12, 2020 the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors has the opportunity to take the first step in closing the digital divide for vulnerable families. As school board trustees, we ask the Board to support working with the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) to provide devices, hot spots, and data plans for the 15,000 families identified by SCCOE who are currently without Internet access. Please vote to approve the referral submitted as Agenda Item 16: Closing the Digital Divide for Vulnerable Families.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposes the need for online access to critical government services like medicine, housing, and food. We are advocating on behalf of our most vulnerable students and their families because we know this crisis disproportionality impacts them. Students who already rely on government services like CalFresh, CalWorks, MediCal, and WIC benefits need Internet access to meet basic needs. Students also need Internet access to participate in distance learning and not fall further behind their peers.

Thank you for your work keeping the residents of Santa Clara County safe during this public health crisis. We hope you will vote on Tuesday to increase digital equity across our community by approving this referral and working with SCCOE to support vulnerable families. While this short-term emergency solution has the potential to address immediate needs, we also hope the county continues to partner with cities to address broadband gaps through long-term infrastructure development.

Sincerely,

Maimona Afzal Berta
Vice President, Franklin-McKinley School Board

Kristiina Arrasmith
Clerk, Campbell Union High School Board

Lorena Chavez
Trustee, Eastside Union High School Board

Devon Conley
Vice President, Mountain View Whisman School Board

Jorge Pacheco, Jr.
Vice President, Oak Grove School Board

José Magaña
Trustee, San Jose Unified School Board
Melissa Baten Caswell  
Trustee, Palo Alto Unified School Board  
President, Santa Clara County School Board’s Association

Fiona Walter  
Trustee, Mountain View Los Altos Union High School Board

Richard Nguyen  
Vice President, Campbell Union School Board

Bonnie Mace  
Trustee, Evergreen School Board

Lori Cunningham  
President, Cupertino Union School Board

Chris Miller  
Trustee, Campbell Union School Board

Courtney Monk  
Trustee, Los Gatos Union School Board

Chris Norwood  
Trustee, Milpitas Unified School Board

Peter Ortiz  
Trustee, Santa Clara County Board of Education

Carla Collins  
Trustee, San Jose Unified School Board

Tamara Wilson  
President, Mountain View Whisman School Board

Ellen Wheeler  
Trustee, Mountain View Whisman School Board

Michele Ryan  
Trustee, Santa Clara Unified School Board

Bridge Watson  
Trustee, Sunnyvale School Board