

November 16, 2018

Dear community,

We are hearing questions today about our decision to close schools, so I'd like to take this opportunity to provide more details.

Here at AUSD, we understand closing schools can create a hardship for parents/guardians who work. We also understand schools are safe and supervised spaces for children. Because of that, we kept our schools open as long as we could this week. But all the superintendents in Alameda County collectively decided to close their districts today, not only because of health concerns but also due to staffing issues. That is, if schools in one part of the region close, staff who live in that town will be unable to get to their jobs in other school districts. And that, in turn, can make it very difficult to provide adequate supervision in classrooms, as well as manage custodial responsibilities, school offices, school meals, and other district responsibilities. Thus, every district in Alameda County (as well as [more than 150 other districts across the state](#)) made this difficult decision.

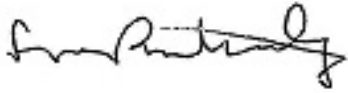
Again, we know this is not easy. We also know our school closure comes on the heels of several weeks of difficult news, including the synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, the bar shooting in Thousand Oaks, the devastating fires in Butte County, and the death last week of an Alameda High School student. Given the scope and depth of issues we are dealing with right now, it makes sense that so many in our community are anxious, sad, and on edge.

But I'd like to suggest these are times that require us as adults to make meaning, find perspective, and model reliance, collaboration, and empathy for our students and colleagues. These are times when we must all work to take care of one another, to be kind to each other, and to be very careful and very mindful with our words and actions. In AUSD we will continue on in our commitment to work on ways we can support those who are impacted emotionally and physically by the events we are collectively

facing in our personal lives, our schools, and our community. We are grateful to all of you – families, teachers, and staff – who work every day to support our students and one another.

Let us all now take time to rest and restore in the week ahead. Let us all take stock of that which we have lost and that for which we can be thankful. And let us take heart knowing that Alameda is a loving and strong community where we take care of one another.

Sincerely,



Sean McPhetridge, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools