CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

Safe Storage of Firearms and School Safety and Security

The California Department of Education (CDE) is focused on the physical and emotional well-being of all students in schools. Safe firearm storage is one of many preventative actions that you can take to keep our school community and school buildings and grounds safe.

Notwithstanding decades of high-profile school shootings throughout the US, safety has improved overall and violence has dropped in California schools. However, schools continue to report heightened stress levels among students. We must continue to prioritize healthy school environments and work to prevent violent attacks on our schools.

The traumatic impact of school shooting incidents is evident. With each incident, regardless of location, our awareness of the need to be vigilant increases. Any level of violence and victimization is unacceptable.

Recent analyses of school shootings found that 68 percent of shooters brought firearms from home to their campus. That is why it is so important for district and school administrators to help educate parents and guardians about California's child firearm access prevention laws. It is a crime for a person to negligently store or leave a firearm in a place where a child is likely to access it.

Please consider this an urgent request to inform your school community about the law regarding safe storage of firearms as required in *Education Code* 49392. Sample templates (in English and Spanish) for memoranda to parents and guardians informing them of the laws in California regarding safe storage of firearms are available on the CDE Violence Prevention web page at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/vp/. I strongly encourage you to use these documents or create your own to help educate parents and guardians of their responsibilities under California law.

When it comes to preventing gun violence in schools, schools cannot do it alone. The CDE and the education community are dedicated to making our schools the safest in the nation, but it is the responsibility of parents, guardians, and family members to store firearms according to California law. We must all work together for California's child access prevention laws to be practiced more widely throughout the state and prevent future tragedies.

Students and staff thrive in a culture free of fear and risk of school shootings. To that end, my staff will continue to provide resources and technical assistance. Please also visit the California Department of Justice Firearm Safety web page at https://oag.ca.gov/firearms/tips for more information.

If you have questions about school safety and security, please contact Dr. Tom Herman, Administrator, School Health and Safety Office, by email at therman@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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