



Early Literacy Declaration of Support 2026

Dear Students, Families, Guardians, Educators, and Residents of San Joaquin County:

San Joaquin County is home to approximately 154,000 students in public education. Whether those students are in one of the fourteen school districts, charter schools, or a program offered by the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE), our educators are devoted to providing high-quality instruction to prepare students for college, career, and meaningful participation in their community.

We have come together once again to champion early literacy in San Joaquin County, reaffirming our shared commitment to ensuring that every student becomes a proficient reader by the end of third grade. This partnership of purpose of the San Joaquin County education community includes all fourteen school districts, SJCOE's Teachers College of San Joaquin (TCSJ), San Joaquin Delta College, and the SJCOE.

Signed in October 2023, the original declaration of support was a pledge to create a unique workgroup called a Community of Practice to learn together and support each other. Today, we renew that pledge by building on our progress and committing to continued action that drives meaningful change.

The Community of Practice will continue to recognize and support individual district goals and early literacy actions for students in TK-third grade, as well as embrace new best practices and standards. Together, Community of Practice members identify research-based strategies, aligning work with the science of reading and strengthening instructional practices in the classroom based on structured literacy.

The countywide commitment to literacy is taking shape in schools in the form of new curricula, increased teacher training, coaching, data reflection, structural changes, and more. We see a culture of literacy where learning to read and reading to learn are at the forefront of decisions and discussions. We are starting to see promising results from this work, but there is still much work to do.

And it must be done, because literacy is the key to future success for our students and our community.

Reading by the third grade is the most critical academic skill for youth because it sets the foundation for future learning and academic success. Literacy also affords students the best opportunity to flourish and realize their full potential.

Research shows there are adverse impacts on our community when literacy rates are low. Literacy is directly related to job readiness, healthcare access, economic development, and the overall well-being of our entire community. Improved literacy can contribute to economic growth, help reduce poverty, promote critical thinking, and provide individuals with access to information.

We pledge as educational leaders to work as collaborative partners to improve each student's ability to learn to read while addressing factors of equity and access that impact academic growth and social-emotional development for all students.

By uniting as educators in San Joaquin County, we are dedicated to working cohesively to improve early literacy learning and support student achievement.

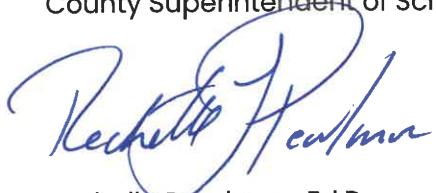
There is power in unity, there is power in connectivity, and there is power in collaboration.

In Partnership,



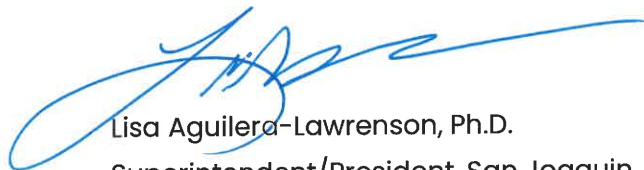
Troy A. Brown, Ed.D.

County Superintendent of Schools



Rechelle Pearlman, Ed.D.

Superintendent, Banta Elementary
School District



Lisa Aguilera-Lawrenson, Ph.D.

Superintendent/President, San Joaquin
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Ricardo Chavez
Superintendent, Escalon Unified
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Kirk Nicholas, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Lammersville Unified
School District



Kelly Dextraze
Superintendent, Lincoln Unified School
District



Scott McGregor
Superintendent, Linden Unified School
District



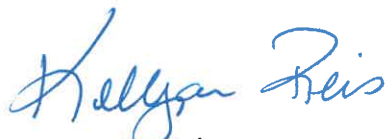
Neil Young
Superintendent, Lodi Unified School
District



Clark Burke, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Manteca Unified
School District



Khushwinder Gill, Ed.D.
Superintendent, New Hope Elementary
School District



Kellyann Reis
Superintendent, New Jerusalem
Elementary School District



Beverly Boone
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Rusty Clark
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District



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Robert Pecot, Ed.D.

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District