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MEDIA RELEASE

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EL CERRITO HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PROGRAM SUSPENDED AS ONGOING HAZING INVESTIGATION WIDENS

EL CERRITO – Today, November 5, the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) announced the suspension of the El Cerrito High School (ECHS) football program in response to an update on the ongoing law enforcement investigation into hazing on the ECHS football team.

A November 5 press release from the El Cerrito Police Department (ECPD) announced that the hazing investigation has now expanded to incidents that occurred between September 2024 and October 2026 and that up to 22 current or former students may be subject to arrest. WCCUSD also has an open and ongoing Title IX investigation into the hazing incidents, which is being conducted by an independent third party.

“No child should ever experience what our students have described,” said WCCUSD Superintendent Cheryl Cotton. “While we have worked to focus on accountability for the actions of individual players up until this point, new information has led to new decisions. We must now make the very tough call to immediately suspend the El Cerrito High football program in order to prevent any further harm and restore a safe learning environment for our students.”

WCCUSD is providing supportive resources for all impacted and involved students and will be implementing anti-hazing education and bystander education across classrooms. As part of the ongoing investigation process, the head coach is on leave.

Anyone who may be in crisis or needs someone to talk to is encouraged to call the 988 Lifeline for free, confidential support 24/7/365 in English or Spanish. Anyone can call or text 988 to seek help for themselves or a friend or family member.

“First and foremost, we must care for our students’ wellbeing,” said Board President Guadalupe Enllana. “As a Board and a district, we are committed to making sure that our students have the guidance and safe learning environments that they need in order to learn, grow, and thrive.”

Media inquiries regarding the criminal investigation into hazing at ECHS should be directed to ECPD. Media inquiries for WCCUSD should be directed to Liz Sanders, Assistant Superintendent of Community Engagement & Communications, at 341-213-8147 or communications@wccusd.net.

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