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Statement from Superintendent Sakuma re: Potential Early Start Date

April 30, 2020

We continue to learn more each day about how the State of California is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how it pertains to our schools here in Butte County. At the moment, we know that all schools will remain on distance learning for the remainder of this school year. On Tuesday however, Governor Newsom suggested that the next school year might begin early to mitigate the potential of learning loss, and he indicated a time frame that starts school as early as July. Yesterday, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond announced that educators across the state will be exploring the logistics required for an early start of school. In Butte County, it's important that we're clear on how such an implementation would occur.

For starters, school district calendars are a complicated matter, and are largely subject to local control. They require tremendous and detailed planning, and collaboration with collective bargaining groups and district administrators. For now, there have been no changes directed from the state-level that would mandate an early start of the next school year. All Butte County schools are working hard to accommodate the students and families as best as they can for the remainder of this school year, and that is our focus as well.

At this time, schools in Butte are moving forward with their board approved instructional calendars as planned. We are presently beginning to discuss the Governor's suggestion at the county and state levels, and we are considering potential impacts on all Butte County Schools. These discussions include considerations about student and faculty/staff safety, renegotiating contracts with employee associations, and other impacts such as transportation, meals, distance learning and equity.

These are uncertain times, but I'm confident that together, we'll get through them. I applaud the work of all educators in Butte County for their hard work and support for our students and families.

Sincerely,

Mary Sakuma
Butte County Superintendent of Schools

"WHERE STUDENTS COME FIRST"