



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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September 5, 2018

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, and Principals:

Back to School

I want to welcome you and your students back to school for the 2018–19 academic year, and also want let you know about some important resources for teachers, students, and their families. We would greatly appreciate it if you share this information with them.

Digital Inclusion

As State Superintendent, I have been a champion of closing the Digital Divide—“No Child Left Off-Line.” However, too many of our students and their families still lack affordable internet access. I encourage you to let parents in your community know that affordable reduced-cost internet services are available from several internet service providers (ISPs) in your area.

The California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) has arranged a statewide telephone number (1-844-841-4636) that can screen families and refer them to a community organization to help them understand the offers and sign up for a service.

Many affordable offers are available for a limited period so **please act quickly**.

Resources:

1. CETF background: <http://www.cetfund.org/aboutus/mission>
2. Toolkit for Teachers (recommended):
http://www.internetforallnow.org/educators_toolkit
3. Find participating organizations: <http://www.cetfund.org/organizations/main>

California Earned Income Tax Credit

Students and their families may be eligible for the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC). Eligible low-income workers can claim the Cal EITC at any time during the year. To date, 1.4 million Californians have claimed the credit, putting over \$300 million back into their pockets. CalEITC4Me, the statewide outreach program for the tax credit, is joining community partners to help prepare families for the new school year.

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For helpful printable materials to share in your offices and at back to school nights, PTA meetings, and other family and community engagement events, go to <http://caleitc4me.org/helpful-materials/>.

Resources:

1. CalEITC4Me background for Schools: <http://caleitc4me.org/schools/>
2. CalEITC4Me background for Teachers: <http://caleitc4me.org/educators/>
3. CalEITC4Me calculator to determine eligibility and expected EITC credit: <http://caleitc4me.org/earn-it/>
4. File your taxes: <http://caleitc4me.org/get-it/>

Student Mental Health

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and I urge all educators and members of the school community to be on the lookout for students showing signs of risk. If you notice someone suffering or in need, please speak out and help point them toward assistance.

Unfortunately, suicide rates have increased significantly over the years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the second leading cause of death for those between 10 and 24 years of age. Below are some resources to share with others.

1. American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <https://afsp.org/>
2. California Department of Education Suicide Prevention web page: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/suicideprevres.asp>
3. California Department of Education Student Mental Health Policy Workgroup: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/smhpworkgroup.asp>
4. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Please encourage those in crisis to use suicide prevention services.

Thank you for sharing these very important resources with your school community. I hope you have a wonderful and successful school year.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson

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