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County Superintendent of Schools

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# San Mateo County Office of Education Receives Grant to Improve Transportation Safety

Redwood City, CA — The San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) received a \$100,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to improve transportation safety for ten priority schools in San Mateo County.

The grant is the result of a collaborative study between the County of San Mateo's Health Policy and Planning Division (HPP) and SMCOE's Safe Routes to Schools program, which encourages school children to walk and bicycle to school through several projects and activities that improve the health, well-being, and safety of children.

The study, which culminated in a report titled [Creating Safer Streets Near Schools](#), identified 15 San Mateo County schools located in high poverty areas and within a quarter mile of intersections with a large number of pedestrian and bicyclist collisions. These intersections account for almost 30 percent of all collisions in San Mateo County that involve someone walking or biking. The report was awarded the 2018 Project of the Year Award at the Silicon Valley Bike Coalition's Annual Bike Summit.

Bicycle and pedestrian deaths account for 29 percent of all roadway deaths in California, and the number of people killed on foot or on a bicycle is growing at an alarming rate. According to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1,014 bicyclists and pedestrians across the state were killed in 2016, a nearly 30 percent increase from 2012. This equates to nearly three bicycle and pedestrian deaths in California every day.

Transportation safety is especially serious for children in lower-income communities, who often walk and bike to school out of necessity and in areas where the infrastructure often does not support safe routes.

"It is inspiring to see this initiative gain traction within our community and attract attention at the state level," said San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Anne E. Campbell. "We cannot afford to ignore the need for safer routes to school within our lower-income communities. With this grant, we now have the means to act upon the study's findings."

The grant will support Safe Routes to School programs at ten of the priority schools identified in the study through providing pedestrian and bicycle safety education, school safety kits, bicycle helmets, and safety presentations in the surrounding communities. The

Safe Routes to School team is also bringing school and city staff together to work collaboratively on transportation-related issues around schools. One of the schools, Los Cerritos Elementary School, has already begun working with the team and participated in International Walk to School Day events on October 10.

“Bicycle and pedestrian safety responsibilities go both ways,” OTS Director Rhonda Craft said. “Understanding the rules of the road behind the wheel, on foot or on two wheels helps all roadway users get where they need to go safely.”

Funding for SMCOE’s Safe Routes to School program was provided by a grant from OTS through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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The San Mateo County Office of Education is committed to ensuring excellence and equity in education by inspiring students, investing in teachers, invigorating leaders, and involving communities.

