



Anne E. Campbell • County Superintendent of Schools

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# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **The San Mateo County Office of Education Is Working to Meet the Preschool Needs of Families in the Ravenswood Community**

REDWOOD CITY, CA. As part of the San Mateo County Office of Education's (SMCOE) efforts to help meet the preschool needs of families in the Ravenswood Community, San Mateo County Superintendent Anne E. Campbell accepted an invitation from East Palo Alto Mayor Ruben Abrica to meet with families and community members in the Community Room of the East Palo Alto Government Center on Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Some families in the community are concerned about how the Ravenswood City School District's (RCSD) decision to relinquish its California State Preschool contract will impact their access to preschool. Currently the contract provides full-day, full-year preschool services to approximately 140 children between the ages of three and five. The Ravenswood Board of Education decided earlier this month that due to a persistent budget shortfall, it is financially infeasible for the District to continue operating the Child Development Center.

Although the Department of Education (CDE) can reassign the State Preschool spaces to any region in the State, the agency has informed SMCOE that it is committed to keeping those spaces in San Mateo County, and preferably in the Ravenswood community. CDE further clarified that because the State Preschool contract at the Child Development Center is fully supported with [Proposition 98](#) funds, only a Local Educational Agency (LEA) that is currently contracted to operate a state preschool program can be reassigned the spaces. An LEA is a school district or a County Office of Education. In the Ravenswood community, only SMCOE and RCSD meet these requirements.

RCSD and SMCOE are working on the details necessary to meet the requirements laid out by CDE for the reassignment of the contract from the district to the County Office. This includes the use of the facility that currently houses the Ravenswood Child Development Center.

If CDE assigns the preschool spaces to SMCOE, several steps will need to be taken before students can begin attending the new preschool. First, SMCOE will need to find a preschool vendor or vendors to operate the program. Second, the vendor/s will need to hire faculty and staff, purchase furniture and supplies, and make other preparations. Third, the state's [Child Care Licensing Program](#) will need to inspect and license the new facility to the vendor/s. Although SMCOE would work with CDE and its vendor/s to expedite this process, it could take six weeks to reopen the new preschool after the Child Development Center closes on June 30, 2018. To help provide coverage for families impacted by the closure, SMCOE will work with the [Childcare Coordinating Council of San Mateo](#) (4Cs) to find a way to cover interim care, including the possibility of providing childcare vouchers to cover the cost of non-state preschool programs during the transition period. If SMCOE is assigned the spaces and once a solution is identified to cover the transition, SMCOE will notify Child Development Center families.

“SMCOE is committed to working with CDE to ensure these preschool spaces remain in the Ravenswood Community, continue as full-day and full-year spaces, and the families who rely on these spaces can continue receiving service with as little disruption as possible,” explained San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Anne E. Campbell.

For more information on SMCOE’s preschool services, please contact Jean-Marie Houston, Administrator of Early Learning Support Services, at [\(650\) 802-5623](tel:6508025623) or [jmhouston@smcoe.org](mailto:jmhouston@smcoe.org).

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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.