April 1, 2020

Dear ECS Family,

As you may have seen in the news, Governor Newsom and State Superintendent Thurmond are recommending that all California schools remain closed and continue to provide distance learning through the end of the academic year.

While we are truly saddened by the prospect of not seeing each other in person again this school year, nothing is more important than the health and well-being of our students, staff and families, and we believe these measures are in the best interest of our community, nation and world.

As it is clear that we will remain in distance-learning mode for months to come, the ECS leadership team has developed a Working Vision for Distance Learning to provide direction for teachers, counselors, staff, students, and parents. This working vision was developed based on stakeholder input and survey feedback from our first few weeks of distance learning.

**Working Vision For Distance Learning**

*ECS has not wavered in our commitment to our mission. During this time, ECS will deliver a high-quality distance-learning program that attends to students’ social, emotional and intellectual needs. Now more than ever, our students must engage in conscious critical thinking with their teachers and classmates. We will, therefore, provide rigorous, engaging, equitable instruction to all ECS students to help them make sense of the world right now. As we develop our plan for ECS education online, we will ensure that our approach is student-centered, collaborative, flexible, and sustainable. When we reopen our campuses, ECS students, teachers, and staff will return ready for continued learning, teaching, and community building.*

**In attending to this vision, we commit to the following goals:**

- **Teachers and counselors will strive to help students regularly connect with their classmates and ECS staff.** The isolation we are all experiencing presents major challenges to our social and emotional well-being. Students need opportunities to remain connected to their classmates, teachers, and counselors. All ECS staff are collaborating closely and will be using a variety of methods to achieve this.

- **We will work to respond to families’ concerns.** In addition to continuing to provide meals and technology access, we will work to understand challenging circumstances that may impede student progress. We will do everything possible to alleviate challenges and support families during this time.
We will refine our instructional best practices for distance learning and provide an equitable, rigorous, relevant curriculum. We will seek ways to focus our curriculum on essential standards that support critical thinking, cultivate student agency, and provide inspiration. We remain focused on engaging students in content and supporting students who are not meeting the standards.

Students will receive feedback on their assignments. We are continuing to communicate with other local districts, the county, and the state regarding report cards, final grades, and grades on transcripts. This is an evolving discussion, and we will continue to communicate with families when updates are available. Furthermore, we aim to provide the highest quality culmination/graduation experiences possible under the circumstances.

We will strive to be patient and flexible. Our teachers, counselors, paraeducators and staff are working to adjust to a whole new model of instructional delivery, often while dealing with the challenge of working from home and caring for families. We also recognize some of our students are experiencing similar challenges. To the best of our ability, we will work together to help provide students the support they need to plan, manage, and structure their day. We understand that lessons and assignments may take a little longer or turn out differently than we expect.

We are grateful for your partnership and support through this transition. With compassion, creativity and support from the ECS community, we will continue to learn and grow through this pandemic and our community will emerge stronger and more together than ever.

Please reach out to us with your concerns and needs.

Sincerely,

Farnaz Golshani-Flechner
CEO, Environmental Charter Schools