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**California Department of Education
Official Letter**

January 9, 2018

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, School Principals, and Child Development Program Directors:

THE GREAT KINDNESS CHALLENGE WEEK JANUARY 22–26, 2018

The California Department of Education (CDE) is kicking off 2018 by participating in The Great Kindness Challenge® (GKC) and would like to invite all schools, preschools, and child care centers to join us!

Presented by Kids for Peace, the GKC is a national program that promotes kindness at our child care centers and schools from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. It is a positive and proactive anti-bullying initiative that educators can use to empower and encourage your students to create a culture of kindness plus it's free and easy to implement. This program is also aligned with the CDE's efforts to meet the social and emotional needs of the whole child as well as ensure a safe haven for all of our students.

The GKC is a school week devoted to performing as many acts of kindness as possible. Participants will use a customizable 50-item checklist to mark their progress through the week. The acts of kindness include not only being kind to others, but being kind to yourself, animals, and the earth. Write a thank you note to your mail carrier or a fire fighter; make a new friend; smile or say "good morning" to five people; or learn to say "hello" in a new language. There are many exciting ways we can promote a culture of acceptance and tolerance. The intent of this one dedicated week is that it will hopefully spread into the rest of the year, off school grounds, into neighborhoods, and onto local communities.

Statistics show that 18 out of 100 high school students have been bullied on school campus in the last twelve months, this number translates into 290,000 California students. Last year, the GKC impacted over 10 million students in over 15,000 schools by performing over 500 million acts of kindness.

I encourage all California schools to participate in this challenge. At CDE, we will actively promote this program for the 6.3 million plus students enrolled in our schools as well as at the CDE among our staff.

For more details, visit the GKC website at <http://www.greatkindnesschallenge.org>.

Let's do this together as a team and be kind to one another!

Sincerely,

Tom Torlakson

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