

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
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**SCCOE launches internal investigation regarding
employee arrested on child pornography charges**

Information corrected to show suspect would have had contact with students

SAN JOSE, CA – The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) has moved swiftly to launch an internal investigation into the circumstances related to the May 7 arrest of employee Edgar Covarrubias on child pornography-related charges. Covarrubias worked at Walden West Outdoor School. The SCCOE continues to cooperate fully with law enforcement.

To correct and update information previously released by the SCCOE, Covarrubias held several different positions over his two years of employment at Walden West, a County Office of Education program that provides science and environmental education and outdoor school experiences. It operates at two sites, one in Saratoga and the second in Cupertino. Covarrubias has held positions at both sites. At the time of his arrest, he was the Night Manager at the Cupertino site. Based upon our initial information, a previous statement in a newspaper article on Friday said that none of his jobs required Covarrubias to interact with any of the students at the camp. However, in his positions, he would have had contact with students.

“We will be reviewing all of our procedures at Walden West with the intent to see where we can improve and revise our protocols and procedures as the safety and security of our students and staff continues to be our highest priority,” said Jon R. Gundry, County Superintendent of Schools.

Covarrubias was first employed by the SCCOE in August 2013, and was subject to all of the standard background screening for employment, including fingerprint clearance from the Department of Justice. He is no longer employed by the SCCOE.

At Walden West, every staff member was known by nature nicknames as part of the environmental-related theme of the program. Covarrubias was known to children as “Papa Bear.”

The Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Department has asked anyone with information regarding this case to contact the Sexual Assault Felony Task Force (SAFE) at (408) 808-4300, or via email: safetaskforce@sheriff.sccgov.org.

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