



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION**

TONY THURMOND
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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August 28, 2026

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, and School Principals:

The 2026 Great California ShakeOut

Schools, districts, and county offices of education can meet state earthquake drill requirements by participating in the 2026 Great California ShakeOut! Most will participate on October 15, 2026; however, drills can be held on another day if necessary. The first step is to renew or register your organization's participation today on the Great California ShakeOut website at <https://www.shakeout.org/california/>.

Last year, more than 10.4 million Californians practiced "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" as part of the annual Great California ShakeOut earthquake drill and other safety procedures (<https://www.shakeout.org/california/dropcoverholdon/>). This included more than 5.4 million kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) students and staff from more than 450 school districts, 320 charter schools, and 460 private schools (https://www.shakeout.org/california/participant_list.php?year=2025&start=california&category=schools). Broad school participation helps inspire businesses, organizations, government agencies, and individuals statewide to also take part in practicing safety procedures that include guidance for people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs (<https://www.earthquakecountry.org/accessibility/>).

Registered participants can access safety guidance and drill planning information for their drills. The California Department of Education (CDE) has worked with many partners to create age-appropriate resources for planning drills, promoting participation, teaching about earthquakes and preparedness, and educating families. You will find these resources on the Great ShakeOut K–12 Schools and Districts web page at <https://shakeout.org/schools/>.

School leaders are encouraged to request that all teachers and staff practice "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" with students and to hold drills in a variety of locations (not just in classrooms but also in cafeterias, during recess, or even during breaks between classes), as an earthquake may happen when everyone is not seated at desks. Similarly, please encourage students and staff to practice earthquake drills at home.

The Great California ShakeOut is organized by the Earthquake Country Alliance. Additional information is available on the Earthquake Country Alliance website at <https://www.earthquakecountry.org/>. Members include the CDE, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the Statewide California Earthquake Center,

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the American Red Cross, the California Earthquake Authority, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the University of Southern California, and many others.

Please forward this message to your school contacts at all levels so everyone can participate.

For assistance with registering your organization or district for the Great California ShakeOut, please contact Mark Benthien, Executive Director, Earthquake Country Alliance, at 213-740-3262 or info@shakeout.org. If you have general safety questions, please contact the CDE Emergency Services Team at emergencyservices@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Thurmond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tony" and last name "Thurmond" clearly distinguishable.

Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

TT:dc