



August 6, 2021

Hello, Scottsdale Unified School District Families!

It was wonderful to welcome your students to the kickoff of the 2021-2022 school year this week! District administrators made the rounds to all 28 of our campuses and report seeing many, many smiles on the faces of students, teachers, school support staff, principals and assistant principals, alike. These first few days are a process, with the setting of new routines and expectations, and now it's time to do what Scottsdale Unified does best: teach!

We begin this new school year still under the cloud of a global pandemic. We had hoped that this year's 'normal' would be more like past 'normals,' but it is not. We understand the concern about the district's ability to provide safe and healthy learning spaces for your students, particularly among those of you with elementary school students who are currently ineligible to be vaccinated. Given the state prohibition on mask mandates, we have implemented a thoughtful and deliberate layered [mitigation strategy](#) to protect your students and our staff. ***You play a major role in this strategy's success.***

- Please keep your student home if he or she has any of the COVID-like symptoms listed below, even if your child only has one of them and you attribute it to a minor cold or allergies. **This is critical to our ability to offer in-person learning.**
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- Please discuss with your school nurse *prior* to sending your student to school.
- It is also important that you notify your school nurse if your child is a close contact of a COVID-positive person or if someone in your household has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Please report student/family COVID-positive cases to the school nurse immediately.
- We continue to *strongly recommend* that your students, especially those under the age of 12, wear a mask while inside at school.
- We *strongly recommend* that your students age 12+ be vaccinated against COVID.
- Please encourage your students to respect the masking/non-masking decision of classmates.

Given the high COVID transmission rates [in our community right now](#), our campuses will not be open for volunteers or visitors during the instructional day for the month of August. We are committed to a weekly review, and look forward to the time when we can invite volunteers back in our classrooms.

SUSD continues to partner with Embry Women's Health, which operates a [COVID testing site](#) at our Oak Learning Academy campus, 7501 E. Oak St., Scottsdale. The site is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Supporting Student Learning During Quarantine

Despite the layered mitigation strategies we are using to minimize the risk of COVID transmission in our schools, there may be times when it is necessary for some students to quarantine, as determined by local public health officials.

Our team has been working on innovative ways to support students who are temporarily at home because of quarantine or are ill due to COVID or a COVID-like illness. During their absence from in-person learning, students will be provided access to instructional materials and support to continue learning while at home. Your student's teacher will provide direction on accessing materials and support. Many teachers will house materials in a student management system, such as Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams, and will continue to find innovative ways to support students who are quarantined at home.

Additionally, the Educational Services team has been working with principals and teachers to create a plan to ensure continued learning for students while at home through virtual individual or small group sessions. Tutoring will be provided by an SUSD teacher or our virtual tutoring partner, Varsity Tutors. Varsity Tutors is a trusted, online tutoring service that we partnered with successfully this summer. It is anticipated that this supplemental level of support will begin by August 23.

Scottsdale Online Learning

Some families may not feel comfortable sending their students to their brick-and-mortar school just yet. If space is available in SUSD's online school, Scottsdale Online, K-8 students may transfer from in-person learning to Scottsdale Online. For high school students to enroll in Scottsdale Online, a semester-long choice must be made, as the credit-bearing courses and structure of program do not allow for mid-semester transfers. Students' ability to transfer from Scottsdale Online back to in-person learning will also be determined by space availability at the school.

Students wanting to join Scottsdale Online must follow the open enrollment transfer process. For the emotional and academic well-being of each student, we discourage students moving from in-person to virtual or virtual to in-person at a high level of frequency.

Athletics Update

We are excited to have an opportunity to offer full high school and middle school athletics during the 2021-2022 school year. This fall, we will have girls volleyball and boys basketball at the middle school level. We have cross country, girls badminton, football, girls volleyball, golf and swim/dive at the high school level. Those students wishing to participate in fall athletics must sign up in [Register My Athlete](#) prior to tryouts.

We will continue to rely upon the Maricopa County Department of Public Health and the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) for guidance as it relates to COVID-19. Masks are strongly encouraged and welcome, as well as vaccination. Unvaccinated athletes will be quarantined if they are a close contact of someone who tests positive for COVID-19, whereas vaccinated athletes are not required to quarantine. Coaches will continue to perform symptoms logs daily for athletes and we will cohort when possible. An outbreak of COVID-19 on a team could require a shutdown of the entire team, per [AIA guidance](#), for 8 days.

Through our partnership with the [NFHS](#), live-streaming subscription options from high schools gyms and football fields will be available for those who are unable to attend but would still like to watch games. We will sell tickets electronically through [GoFan](#). Schools will be sending out links to purchase tickets. If you have specific questions regarding Athletics, please reach out to your school's Athletic Director.

Nutrition Services

FREE Meals for ALL – The USDA has extended the waiver to allow ALL SUSD in-person learners to receive FREE breakfast and lunch daily throughout the entire 2021/2022 school year! This means ALL Pre-K – grade 12 students will not be charged for a breakfast and/or lunch this school year (students choosing more than one meal will be charged for the meals exceeding one per meal period). Families do not need to fund student meal accounts in Titan, but may add funds to their student's account, should they wish to allow their student to purchase à la carte items, in addition to receiving the free meal.

Free and Reduced Meal Applications

As stated above, meals are all FREE and require NO applications this year. *However*, the District encourages families that think they may qualify for either free or reduced meal status to submit an application anyway, as that approval not only qualifies the children for other assistance programs beyond school meals, but also benefits SUSD with Title I funding and various grant qualifiers. It is very important to note that if an applying family receives a denial letter stating that it did not meet the free-and-reduced qualifications, they are still able to receive free breakfast and lunch daily at all SUSD schools. The meal application does not impact the ability to receive free meals this school year. Submit a meal application by visiting <https://family.titank12.com/?identifier=TUJAZ9>.

Parent Volunteer Opportunities

- *Strategic Planning Design Team: Phase 2*

Partnering with our parent community is key to being a unified district! As we head into Phase 2 of our Strategic Planning process – the development of SUSD’s strategic goals – there is an opening on the team for a parent from the Desert Mountain Learning Community. Read about the group’s work and apply [here](#). Applications are due by August 16.

- *Audit Committee*

This is a newly established committee whose purpose is to provide a structured, systematic review of the district’s governance, risk management and internal control practices. The committee assists the Governing Board and management by providing advice and guidance on the adequacy of the organization’s initiatives for values and ethics; governance structure; risk management; internal control framework; oversight of the district’s internal audit activity, external auditors and other providers of assurance; and financial statements and public accountability reporting. Read more about this panel’s work and apply [here](#). Applications to the new Audit Committee are also due by August 16.

New Thought Exchange

As part of our commitment to open lines of communication with our SUSD parent community, please take a few minutes to participate in our new [Thought Exchange](#). As we head into our first full week of school, share your feedback on what is working well and what we can improve upon. We look forward to seeing your responses.

Cherokee Grand Opening

Finally, as we close out the week, we want to note with you another significant success of the 2016 bond program that you overwhelmingly supported nearly five years ago. The rebuild of Cherokee Elementary School, located at 8801 N. 56th St. in Paradise Valley, is officially complete. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Monday, and while Cherokee students have been occupying the new campus, in parts, since last September, this week was the first time parents were able to walk around, tour classrooms and see the real SUSD school bus that has been converted to a media center reading hub, in homage to children’s literature character Junie B. Jones, created by late Paradise Valley author Barbara Park. The new Cherokee is an amazing teaching and learning facility where world-class, future-focused learning will be embraced.

Have a wonderful weekend,

Scottsdale Unified School District [Cabinet](#) and [Leadership Team](#)