



Mohave District Annex  
Office of the Superintendent  
8500 E. Jackrabbit Road  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85250

Telephone: 480-484-6100  
FAX: 480-484-6293  
Web site: [www.susd.org](http://www.susd.org)

August 13, 2021

Dear Scottsdale Unified School District Parent Community Partners:

We have entered a new and challenging phase related to the spread of COVID. Consistent with our stated commitment, and in compliance with state law, the district made mask wearing optional. Those choosing to wear masks varies by campus. In some places, there were almost no masks on the first day of school and in others, as many as 70-80% chose to wear them. I recognize that the question of masks has been politicized and is polarizing for our community. However, what we are seeing in the [larger community](#) and, more specifically, in our school buildings threatens to disrupt our ability to continue providing in-person instruction unless we take more aggressive steps to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Since we resumed in-person instruction last week, there have been:

- 78 on-campus, confirmed cases of COVID
- 31 confirmed cases among students who did not come to school
- 150 symptomatic students sent home
- 632 students quarantined as close contacts, in compliance with orders of the Maricopa County Department of Public Health.

**We know that providing in-person teaching and learning opportunities is critical for our students, and you have told us that is your preference. At the same time, our ability to do so is predicated on controlling the spread of COVID on our campuses.** Last year, we saw very few cases of on-campus spread, due in large part to mitigation strategies that included wearing masks and a different strain of the COVID virus. In just the first 7 days of this new school year, outbreaks have already been identified at 5 schools and there is more evidence of on-campus transmission than we saw *all of last year*. This trend, if not disrupted, will invariably require not only quarantining even larger numbers of students, but potentially require us to also close classrooms or buildings for significant periods of time and return to virtual learning. Some of our neighboring districts have already had to do this.

I understand COVID fatigue. I personally do not like wearing a mask any more than you or your students do, but in order to slow the transmission of COVID on our campuses, I am again calling on our staff, students, and you, our families, to partner with us by voluntarily agreeing to mask up while indoors on our campuses. Public health officials are clear on what the two best mitigation strategies are to stem this new tide of COVID transmissions: 1) vaccination and 2) wearing a mask. COVID does not discriminate based on partisan politics, and it is circulating more rapidly now than ever among our school-aged youth. As a district committed to minimizing the chances of transmission to nearly 22,000 students learning in-person every day, we respectfully ask that you join us in that effort.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Menzel, PhD  
Superintendent