



August 27, 2021

Dear Scottsdale Unified Families,

Thank you for continued support of the school district’s efforts to maintain in-person learning. We are happy to report that more than 19,000 SUSD K-12 students were in class yesterday, about 90% of our student population. This past week saw a slight decrease in the percentage of positive cases in our 15 zip codes, yet a continued increase in cases per 100,000. In both cases, the metrics still indicate high community transmission of COVID-19. The number of positive cases in our schools (see chart below) also continued to climb with 167 new, confirmed cases on our campuses. You can also see the number of cases, by building, each week [here](#).

	Staff positive COVID cases	On-campus student positive COVID cases reported	Symptomatic students on campus and sent home	Students quarantined due to SUSD close contact	Off-campus positive cases	Students quarantined due to close contact outside of campus	COVID-like symptoms - called in sick	Positive student athletes and after-school clubs
8/4 - 8/12	19	59	215	486	37	146	481	6
8/13 - 8/19	17	125	238	924	23	221	542	6
8/20 - 8/26	19	148	184	420	14	124	488	5
<b>Totals thru 8/26</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>1,830</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>17</b>

As a result of the mask requirement, 50% fewer students were required to quarantine this week than last because they were wearing masks. While close contacts are still expected to monitor for symptoms, the ability of more students to continue attending school for in-person learning is significant. It will take time to truly measure the impact of the current mask requirement, but it is hoped that it, combined with other layered mitigation strategies and the estimate that the Delta variant surge peaks in mid-September, will lead to a reduction of COVID spread on campuses and allow more students to continue coming to school every day.

We are grateful for the high level of mask compliance we are seeing from students. Issues that were raised initially have been resolved. *If you need to request an accommodation for your student from the mask requirement, please submit your request [here](#) by 5 p.m., Tuesday, August 31.* Medical requests for an accommodation can be submitted at any time.

### ***Addressing Misinformation***

During the public comment portion of the Governing Board meeting on Tuesday, a number of inaccurate statements were made which have created confusion for some in our community. We would like to address them here.

- SUSD takes the issue of student suicide and suicidal ideation very seriously. Last year, one SUSD student died by suicide; another died in 2018. One is too many, and our district has a focus on social emotional learning (SEL) to address student mental health concerns. Social workers are in place at 24 of our 28 schools, with the remaining four schools receiving extra support in the interim, and we continue to train staff on the warning signs to watch for so that students who may be struggling can be referred for proper support. We will continue to work through our Student Services department to address the mental health needs of our students, as we navigate COVID and beyond.
- A comment was made indicating an SUSD employee had distributed “neo-Nazi propaganda.” The commenter referenced district internal email communication that, at the time it was written, supported that assertion. The email indicated an employee was *under investigation*, but after multiple interviews and review of video footage, it became clear it was not an SUSD employee who left the offensive comic books on the campus. Rather, a man who has since been identified as a known, white supremacist **who does not live in Scottsdale** was seen exiting a vehicle on two separate occasions and walked up to the school, carrying the envelopes containing the white supremacist material in comic book form. On his third visit to the campus, the Scottsdale Police Department confronted him and he is now forbidden from being on any SUSD campus. The actions of this individual are reprehensible. We are grateful that none of our students found this vile propaganda.
- During this same part of the meeting, the Board President reacted to the above false claim with an offensive remark which he has acknowledged as being inappropriate and for which he has apologized. SUSD is committed to listening respectfully to students, staff, parents and community members, regardless of differences of opinion.
- Another comment was made related to the future of Cheyenne Traditional School. It was asserted that during the first phase of the Strategic Planning Design process that the topic of whether Cheyenne Traditional fits within the vision for the district’s future was raised. There were some conversations during the committee meetings about our various programs and how they connect with the vision of the future that was being discussed. Part of the strength of our district is the ability to offer different options for parents, based on the needs of their students – Scottsdale Unified, but not uniform. Cheyenne Traditional provides a unique program option, has high demand from parents, and produces outstanding educational results. Conversations about how our programs align with our vision, mission and values are important, but that does not mean that a program is going to be changed. The Governing Board has not considered, nor is it considering, making any changes to the Cheyenne model. Summaries of the Strategic Planning Design Committee’s work to date can be found on the [SUSD website](#).
- Several speakers delivered comments about Critical Race Theory. To reaffirm, SUSD does not and has not incorporated Critical Race Theory in our curriculum.

- Finally, the decision to restructure Tuesday’s Board meeting to ensure it was conducted in a safe and orderly manner was made in consultation with the Scottsdale Police Department.

These are challenging times and emotions are running high, as evidenced by the passionate public comments on both sides of the mask requirement made Tuesday evening to the Board. Some of this emotion has carried onto our school campuses in the form of inappropriate interactions with school staff and remarks to parents and students who have made different choices than you. Please treat all SUSD staff, students and fellow parents with respect and civility.

### ***New Opportunities to Volunteer***

Several SUSD operations remain considerably understaffed and we would like to encourage you to be part of interim solutions. Our Nutrition Services department, aka Team Awesome, is in serious need of bolstering. While it continues to do everything possible to hire staff, if you might have a few hours or days a week to help package meals and serve lunch, it would be greatly appreciated. Volunteers will be required to wear a mask and be fully vaccinated. A food handler’s license is not required. If you are interested in pitching in, please call 480-484-6234 or email Patti Bilbrey at [pbilbrey@susd.org](mailto:pbilbrey@susd.org).

We are also continuing to hire substitute teachers, Special Education paraprofessionals and bus drivers. To see those opportunities, please go to [www.susd.org/Jobs](http://www.susd.org/Jobs).

### ***Celebrations***

In closing, we want to draw your attention to Charles Hamilton, better known as “Mr. Charles” in the Cochise Elementary School community. Mr. Charles, who turns 80 years old today, works mornings and afternoons as a school crossing guard and also helps out in the Cochise cafeteria. Yesterday, Cochise surprised him with an [early birthday celebration](#). Happy birthday, Mr. Charles, and thank you for embodying SUSD values.

Have a good weekend.

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

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### **Community COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Resources**

SUSD continues to partner with [Embry Women’s Health](#), which operates three, convenient COVID testing sites in the SUSD community:

- Oak Learning Academy campus, 7501 E. Oak St., Scottsdale - open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Chaparral Business Center, 8840 E. Chaparral Rd., Scottsdale – open from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 7 days a week
- Phoenix Camelback Seventh-day Adventist Church, 5902 E. Camelback Rd., Phoenix – open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday thru Friday

COVID-19 vaccinations are widely available throughout our community at both stand-alone pharmacies, such as Walgreen’s and CVS, and at pharmacies located inside major grocery stores. They also do COVID testing on-site.

**Albertsons:** <https://www.albertsons.com/pharmacy/covid-19.html>

**Costco:** <https://www.costco.com/covid-vaccine.html>

**CVS:** <https://www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine?icid=cvs-home-hero1-link1-coronavirus-vaccine>

**Fry's:** <https://www.frysfood.com/rx/covid-eligibility>

**Ranch Pharmacy:** 10769 N. Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd., Scottsdale

**Safeway:** <https://www.safeway.com/pharmacy/covid-19.html>

**Walgreens:** <https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp>

*Other community vaccination resources:*

**NOAH - Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health:** <https://noahhelps.org/covid-vaccine/>

**Maricopa County Department of Public Health COVID-19 Vaccine**

**Locations:** <https://www.maricopa.gov/5659/COVID-19-Vaccine-Locations>

**Arizona Department of Health Services COVID-19 Vaccine**

**Locations:** <https://www.azdhs.gov/covid19/vaccines/index.php#find-vaccines>