



November 5, 2021

Dear SUSD Families,

We know you are weary of living with, navigating around and hearing about the COVID-19 pandemic - we are, too, but there's no mistaking that this has been a significant week for our nation, state and school district.

On Tuesday, the CDC granted emergency use authorization (EUA) to the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11. This means that for the first time since COVID-19 crossed our shores nearly two years ago, almost everyone has the opportunity to be vaccinated, including our elementary school students. In fact, the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) will begin vaccinating youngsters tomorrow and throughout the month of November [at various locations](#) around the county. The vaccine is also being made available to pediatrician offices, community health organizations and retail pharmacies. MCDPH has prepared [this flyer](#) to explain the kids' Pfizer rollout in our county and answer basic questions about the vaccine.

This new, COVID-fighting tool comes at a good time: our community's virus transmission level [remains high](#) and active cases in our buildings over the past week [number more than 100](#) for the first time since late August. This is most likely attributable to the diagnosis of infections acquired during fall break, and while disheartening, it is probably to have been expected.

### ***Significant shift coming in 2022***

This week's CDC action and the ruling, also on Tuesday, by the Arizona Supreme Court that the legislature's mask-mandate ban was enacted unconstitutionally provides us with some new room to manage our COVID risk.

Because it takes five weeks for a person to be considered fully vaccinated, from the time of the first shot, the three-week wait until the second one and two more weeks after that for the vaccine to reach peak effectiveness,

- ***SUSD will maintain its current mask requirement through the remainder of this semester.***
- ***We will go back to a mask-optional policy when we return from winter break on Tuesday, January 4, 2022.***

For as long as community transmission levels remain in the high or substantial categories, starting in January we will encourage the wearing of masks while indoors, per CDC, AzDHS and MCDPH recommendations, but it will not be required.

### ***Mask exemptions***

Overall, our students have been terrific with their mask compliance since August. We sincerely believe their actions have contributed greatly to SUSD's ability to manage COVID infections at our schools.

That said, we also recognize that some students struggle with the requirement, and for that reason, we are [re-opening the mask exemption application process](#). Exemptions will be considered for the remainder of the semester. ***Please recall that if your student is unmasked and is determined to be a COVID close contact, he/she may be subject to quarantine, as required by MCDPH.***

### ***Coronado Minds in Motion***

As you know, SUSD is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary this school year. Part of that legacy is the longstanding celebration of the academic achievements of Coronado High School students, called “Minds in Motion.” Last evening, 139 members of this year’s sophomore, junior and senior classes were feted. This year’s 30<sup>th</sup> edition of Minds in Motion and the \$5,000 in prizes that were awarded to these dedicated learners were made possible by the generosity of the Coronado Foundation for the Future, PTSO, Band Boosters, PACE, Home Smart, Coronado staff members and Coronado families. Congrats, Dons!

### ***Canal Convergence***

Tonight marks the return of the city of Scottsdale’s [Canal Convergence](#), a unique, annual Scottsdale Arts celebration of water, art and light. One of the installations this year is a collaboration by Saguaro High School visual arts and robotics students, named [The Case of the Missing Artwork](#), so be sure to look for it. Canal Convergence runs through November 14 and can be found along the Goldwater Boulevard Canal at 7025 E. Via Soleri Dr.

### ***On Stage at SUSD***

If you’re looking for the performing arts, you need look no further than the stages of two SUSD high schools this week and next.

Tonight and tomorrow night, Arcadia High School presents an updated version of Reginald Rose’s *12 Angry Men*, retitled *12 Angry Jurors*. The play centers on the deliberations of a jury that is deciding the fate of a juvenile on trial for murder and the way the jurors’ minds change about the defendant’s guilt over the course of many hours of discussion and heated debate. Tickets are \$5 at the door.

Next week, Chaparral Theatre takes on a moving, Holocaust-themed, one-act play based on a book of drawings and poetry of Jewish students imprisoned between 1942 and 1945 at the Terezin concentration camp in what is now the Czech Republic. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* is told as a recollection of one of the camp’s few survivors, who was the age of our middle school students when she was imprisoned there.

The 7 p.m. shows on November 9, 10, 12 and 13 are preceded at 6 p.m. by a talk in the Auditorium’s east pod by a Holocaust survivor or a member of a survivor’s family. The Auditorium lobby will be transformed into an art exhibit called “The Butterfly Project,” featuring the artwork and photographs of the Terezin children and butterflies created by Cocopah and Mohave Middle School art students. Tickets can be purchased [here](#). The Chaparral cast and crew take the production on the road next summer as part of the American High School Theatre Festival element of Edinburgh, Scotland’s annual Festival Fringe.

### ***Native American Heritage Month***

SUSD joins the nation this month in celebrating the rich history and culture of America’s indigenous peoples. Recent news reports from other states of incidents of disrespect for Native Americans’ cultural traditions are troubling and unacceptable. We invite you to join us in celebrating our tribal history and supporting our SUSD students who are members of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa, Pascua Yaqui and Navajo tribes.

Lastly, here's your reminder that in honor of those who have served our nation in the armed forces, there is no school next Thursday, November 11, Veterans Day.

Thank you, and have a wonderful weekend.

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