



February 4, 2022

Dear SUSD Families,

Our school district is abuzz with activity as we celebrate student and staff successes and participate in longstanding community traditions.

Academics

Congratulations go out to Saguaro High School Engineering II students Owen Barker, Donovan Grant, Brody Kladis and Noah Shoup, winners of the state's 2022 [Unmanned Aircraft System Challenge](#). All four boys are part of SUSD's [Math & Science Academy](#), and now take their drone design system to compete virtually in the Real World Design Challenge national and international competition in April. Susan Lindberg is their teacher.

Each year, World Languages students have the opportunity to earn an [Arizona Department of Education Seal of Biliteracy](#) to add to their diplomas. The seal is intended to recognize students who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English, honors their language skills and language diversity, and serves as evidence of 21st century skills to future employers and college admissions offices. It is not unusual for more than 100 members of our graduating classes each year to earn this prestigious seal, but this year, for some reason, the number of applications that have been submitted is down, not only in our district, but statewide. If you have a graduating senior taking a 4th level, 5th level or Advanced Placement World Language course, we encourage your students to consider [submitting an application](#) and bolstering their academic résumé. The application deadline has been extended to March 1. [Sophomores](#) and [juniors](#) may also apply now, in advance of their graduation. You can direct questions about the Seal process and requirements to our World Languages Academic Coach, [Wendy Diozzi](#).

SUSD in the Community

SUSD offers outstanding learning opportunities to art students, among them the opportunity to have their work shown in the [Shemer Art Center](#)'s annual New Horizons High School Student Art Exhibit. High school art teachers from around the Valley submit two entries per school from among their junior and senior year students, and this year, the amazing pieces of 10 SUSD students have been selected as winners and are now part of the museum's exhibit. Congratulations to:

- Mikah Tripkehughes and Jenna Warren, Arcadia High School
- Andrea Piedra Contreras and Sarah Saavedra, Chaparral High School
- Trinity Collins and Marley Lincoln, Coronado High School
- Kathryn Vignaroli and Hannah Seratte, Desert Mountain High School; and
- Tatum Hennessey and Katie Caminiti, Saguaro High School

The Shemer exhibit runs through February 17.

This month, we join the nation in celebrating Black History Month. SUSD students are learning about the deep and lasting contributions of African-Americans to our nation's history, and we look forward to sharing some of that with you over the course of February.

Last month, two SUSD students were recognized for essays entered into Arizona State University's 37th annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration writing competition. Saguaro High School sophomore Amutha Rajasundaram took top honors in the upper grades contest for her essay about her mother; Desert Canyon Middle School 7th grader Abigail Malinovitz took 3rd place at the middle grades level with the story of her great grandfather. Students were tasked with creating an essay or poem about someone they know from their lives or in their community who demonstrates leadership through service. Read their winning entries on pages [9 and 10](#).

COVID Update

The [trends](#) are continuing to move in the right direction, although the percent positivity and overall case count [remain high](#). Our school-by-school data is similar to the decline in cases we are seeing across Maricopa County and is consistent with what public health experts have been predicting. We look forward to our continued return to normal, day-to-day activities as we head into the coming weeks. It was wonderful to see volunteers return to our campuses this week!

We very deeply appreciate the difficult work of our school nurses over the past year and a half. They have truly risen to the challenges related to navigating COVID, in an effort to reduce on-campus spread. School nurses are important members of their school communities, pandemic or not. Read about one of them, Arcadia High School nurse Dorcas Guest-Nelson, in this month's edition of [Arcadia News](#).

Aggregate Expenditure Limit - Update

Superintendent Menzel was part of a delegation from North Valley school districts that visited with several lawmakers at the state capitol yesterday. While there are questions about when the legislature will take a vote on overriding the [Aggregate Expenditure Limit](#), the superintendents were assured that it will be addressed before the March 1 deadline. What is less certain is whether it will be a "clean bill," with no unrelated, proposed education policy changes attached to it. We will update you with significant developments as the deadline approaches.

In Closing

Two big events take place tomorrow: the spring [Middle School Sports Festival](#) for flag football and girls basketball at Desert Mountain High School and neighboring Mountainside Middle School, beginning at 8 a.m., and the 2022 [Parada del Sol](#) through the streets of Old Town Scottsdale. Scottsdale High School alum Dan Harkins of Harkins Theatres is the parade's Grand Marshall. Among those following behind will be a host of SUSD entries, including all five high school marching bands, middle school marching bands, pom teams, school floats and more. It's going to be sunny, but chilly, so bundle up and partake of the event of your interest!

Coming up next week, from February 9–11, [Little Women, The Broadway Musical](#) takes to the Chaparral High School Auditorium stage at 7 p.m. each evening. Find ticket information [here](#).

Finally, remember that next Wednesday, February 9, is an early release day for all grade levels.

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