



February 25, 2022

Dear SUSD Families,

Arizona's more than 200 public school districts breathed a sigh of relief this week as the legislature concluded its work to successfully override the Aggregate Expenditure Limit (AEL) for state funding of the current school year. SUSD had faced the prospect of having to chop \$27 million from the budget if state lawmakers had not acted in time. While the result is what was needed, the long-term issue of the AEL itself remains and must be addressed in a more permanent way in order to avoid future calamity. We will continue monitoring developments at the state capitol.

One of our district strategic goals is community engagement and partnership. We aim to foster relationships with mentors, volunteers and business partners to provide real-world opportunities for students that enhance and strengthen our community. This week, Coronado High School students had the chance to attend a luncheon with leaders from Scottsdale's largest employer, HonorHealth. The event, hosted by the Scottsdale Unified School District Foundation, provided students the opportunity to meet and mingle with professionals, while also exploring a multitude of healthcare system career pathways. From medicine to finance, technology and marketing, these mentors helped students recognize that there are opportunities to align their passions with real careers that would inevitably benefit not only the students, but the community as a whole. Thank you to the Foundation for coordinating this event, and thank you to HonorHealth for the role you play in supporting the health and future success of Scottsdale students. Engaging all students in world-class, future-focused learning means providing opportunities for students to see the real-world applications of what they learn in our classrooms. Please contact the [Foundation](#) if you are interested in partnering in these efforts.

### ***2016 Bond Projects***

SUSD is entering the final phase of elementary school reconstruction projects that voters approved in 2016. Kiva's revival is well underway, and plans for Pueblo and Tavan are moving along swiftly. We want to thank those schools' parent communities and neighbors for weighing in along the way as we work to create 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and teaching spaces for our students. We also are indebted to the district's 14-member volunteer Bond and Capital Oversight Committee that continues to guide our work.

Turning to an already completed bond project, we were happy to learn this week that the adaptive reuse design for Hohokam, which reopened in August, has been nominated for what's called a Real Estate and Development (RED) Award. SPS+ Architects designed a beautiful plan for the Hohokam learning community and surrounding neighborhood that continues to receive not only our rave reviews, but also from others. The RED Awards are considered the Academy Awards of Arizona's commercial real estate industry and annually honor the previous year's top architects, contractors, developers and projects. Good luck, SPS+!

### ***Academics***

The Arcadia High School Speech and Debate team is in Chandler today and tomorrow to take part in the AIA Division I state tournament. The event is quite comprehensive, from traditional

debate formats covering current events, as well as a throwback, Lincoln and Douglas-styled debates, dramatic and humorous interpretations, and original oratory. Best wishes+, Titans!

Postponed from January, the Arizona First Lego League (FLL) state championship takes place at Arizona State University next weekend. SUSD will be represented by Navajo Elementary's RoboBUFFs team and Cocopah Middle School's community team, the ElectroBotz. While FLL is wrapping up, the high school robotics competition season is just now getting underway. Teams from Arcadia and Chaparral will be heading up the hill to Flagstaff March 9-12 for the Arizona North Regional competition at Northern Arizona University.

The following week, during SUSD's spring break, we are really excited to announce that Chaparral will host the Arizona Valley Regional robotics tournament! Arcadia, Chaparral and Saguaro are among the 35 teams from the Valley, the state, California, Utah and even Singapore that will be there. If you have never attended a high school robotics tournament and your spring break calendar is open Friday, March 18 or Saturday, March 19, drop by Chaparral to see these student-designed, -constructed and -computer-programmed 'bots face off against each other and the clock, all to the narration of an energized, play-by-play announcer. It's a lot of fun and is the culmination of months and months of work by high school STEM teams.

### ***Athletics***

Wrestlers from Arcadia, Chaparral, Coronado and Desert Mountain took part in the AIA State Championships last week, putting in strong performances across multiple weight classes. The Wolves tied for 14<sup>th</sup> place in the Division II tournament, buoyed by the first-place finish in the 150-pound weight class by junior Trent Wikel and supported by seniors Will Gilbert at 215 and Ben Coler at 165. Titan juniors James Alzate DuComb and Mateo Rodriguez, wrestling at 215 and 150, respectively, also had a solid tournament. Congratulations, all SUSD wrestlers!

We also want to note the recent outstanding, top-tier finishes of the Chaparral and Desert Mountain varsity and junior varsity Pom and Cheer teams at national competitions in Florida, as well as at recent state qualifier events. This weekend, teams from Arcadia and Saguaro are competing in the USA Spirit Nationals in Anaheim, CA. Last year's competitions were held virtually, so we know that all of SUSD's teams have been happy to hit the mat in person this year. Coming up next is the big AIA state championship at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Phoenix on Saturday, March 12, the first Saturday of spring break. We know our teams will be ready to jump, stunt and tumble to greatness!

### ***SUSD in the Community***

To close out this week's letter, we want to tell you about Desert Mountain High School sophomore Sydney Franks. This budding student leader is the 2022 Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Scottsdale (BGCS) Youth of the Year! Sydney is a nine-year Thunderbirds Branch Club member and has a good start on her post-secondary studies, thanks to the \$25,000 BGCS scholarship that goes along with her Youth of the Year title. We know she will represent our valued SUSD community partner well in the Arizona State Youth of the Year competition in April.

And just a reminder that next Wednesday, March 2, is an early release day for all schools.

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