



March 4, 2022

Hello, SUSD Families,

As we head into the final week of the third quarter, we have some important updates to share with you, as well as some new opportunities for student, parent and guardian involvement in our district.

Annual Auditor General's Report

This week, the Arizona Auditor General's Office issued its annual analysis of all public school districts' spending for the 2020-2021 school year. The [SUSD report](#) shines a light on our commitment to investing in our students and teachers. Our per pupil spending increased last school year as we continued to prioritize the academic achievement, health and wellness of our students, requiring an investment in the right programs, staff and professional development. And to continue to attract and retain the very best educators for our classrooms and your students, our average teacher salary was higher than that of the state. We want Scottsdale Unified to be students', families' and teachers' first choice.

Academics

We are pleased to announce today that Tamara Jagodzinski has been named principal of the 'new' Tonalea Middle School that opens in August. She has served as principal of Hopi Elementary School for the past six years, navigating it through a campus rebuild, overseeing increased academic achievement and working closely with the school community to strengthen its already strong spirit. Having started as a middle school teacher at Mountainside, in a way, Mrs. Jagodzinski will be returning to her secondary roots at Tonalea. The process to find Hopi's next principal will be a community undertaking and begin soon.

School Climate and Culture

Each of SUSD's five high schools will host a Teen Town Hall in the coming weeks to elevate student voice and learn about issues that are top-of-mind with our students. We look forward to offering these opportunities to foster deeper connections between students and school and district leaders. The first Teen Town Hall takes place tomorrow at Arcadia High School, beginning at 10 a.m. We will share the remainder of the schedule as the dates are finalized.

SUSD in the Community

Working in partnership with the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, SUSD is engaging middle school students in the study of the Sonoran Desert. Seven middle school teachers – Chris Hain and Daniel Cermack from Ingleside; Patricia Hernandez from Tonalea K-8; Lynette Harper from Desert Canyon; Karen Batson and Jim Weser from Mountainside; and Bert te Velde from Mohave – have received professional development and collaborated to create units of study that support middle school Life Science standards, all through the lens of life in the desert we inhabit. These dedicated teachers created a unit that culminates with a field trip to the McDowell Mountain Preserve's Gateway Trailhead and Bajada Trail, where students make observations, collect data and experience how these science concepts apply to life in the Sonoran Desert. Beginning last month and wrapping up next week, approximately 650 of our 7th grade

students are experiencing these rich lessons and gaining valuable field experience. SUSD looks forward to continuing this new partnership with the Conservancy and expanding the opportunity to other schools in the years to come.

Parent Involvement Opportunities

Seeking Special Education Focus Group Volunteers

As you know, SUSD is conducting a survey to gather perceptions of the Special Education programs and services it offers across the district. We are dedicated to supporting staff, students and parents, and are conducting a full evaluation of our special education programming. To complement the survey, SUSD has partnered with Hanover Research to design, facilitate and analyze the input from virtual focus groups this spring. We are seeking volunteers to serve on a focus group (a one-time, 90-minute session) to gather the qualitative perceptions of parents of SUSD students who receive Special Education services, principals, teachers and support staff. If you are interested in serving on the focus group, please click [this link](#) to sign up. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact [Dr. Kimberly Guerin](#), Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services.

Wellness Committee

To annually evaluate the effectiveness of SUSD's Wellness policy and report implementation progress to the Governing Board, the district is establishing a Wellness Committee comprised of district family members, students, representatives of SUSD's Nutritional Services Department, school administrators and other staff. Areas of focus will include nutrition, health services, counseling and psychological services, and school environment. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please complete and submit the [interest form](#). The committee has four Wednesday meetings scheduled in the upcoming weeks, on March 30, April 13, April 27 and May 18. It meets from 3-5 p.m. at the Mohave District Annex, 8500 E. Jackrabbit Rd., Scottsdale.

Project Prom

Attending a high school prom can be a costly affair, so we are grateful to SUSD Governing Board Member Patty Beckman for once again organizing "[Project Prom](#)," a free, one-stop shop for SUSD students' prom-attire shopping. The Project Prom 'store' is open for just two days, next Friday and Saturday, March 11 and 12. If you have some gently-used formal wear in your closet that could use a new home or, in the case of men's wear, smaller-sized suits you are ready to part with, the Saguaro High School office staff will be happy to accept your donation during office hours next week, from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thank you!

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