



January 22, 2021

Hello again, Scottsdale Unified Families,

It has been an eventful week for our school district. It was wonderful to welcome back middle and high school students to in-person learning. We very much appreciate your support of the precautionary measures that were taken before and following winter break. Teachers were overjoyed to see their students again!

Also of significance was the beginning today of our three-day, drive-thru COVID-19 vaccination clinic, made possible through our partners at HonorHealth. We anticipate that more than 1,900 SUSD employees will be vaccinated this weekend against the virus that has upended just about every aspect of 'normal' since it began taking grip on the world almost a year ago. It was especially heartening to see some of our school nurses and District staff volunteering at the vaccination site today, putting an emphasis on the 'unified' of Scottsdale Unified! Employees will return for their second vaccinations Feb. 12-14.

While understanding that very difficult times continue to be ahead for our community, state and nation, being able to see that first glimmer of light at the end of the pandemic tunnel gives us such great hope. Please continue with us down this path to a much better tomorrow by continuing to follow the recognized public health recommendations of wearing a mask, physically distancing yourself from others and washing your hands frequently when you are not at home. And we cannot emphasize enough the need for you to always keep ill students at home, especially now.

Weekly Update from Supt. Menzel

COVID-19

The current [benchmark metrics](#) represent a continuation of substantial community spread of COVID. Our [building level indicators](#) reflect a slight increase in the number of cases overall, with just a couple of buildings with active cases that represent more than 1% of the individuals on that campus. The Building-level COVID Metric committee has had several meetings and is continuing to refine a recommendation for Governing Board consideration. Given the complexity involved in this work and other time constraints, the decision was made to allow time over the weekend for additional review and refinement of the proposal before sending it out to all staff and our community for additional feedback on Monday, January 25 and presenting it to the Governing Board on Tuesday, January 26 at 5 p.m. for possible action. We welcome you to watch the meeting live or at your convenience later on the [District's YouTube channel](#).

As you may have heard, Scottsdale's new mayor, David Ortega, issued an [emergency proclamation](#) on January 13 to reinstate the city's mask mandate. As we've noted many times, our ability to continue offering in-person instruction is dependent not only on what happens in our schools, but also within the larger community. The mayor's decision to issue this proclamation on his second day in office reflects an understanding of the importance the community plays in reducing the spread of the virus. It is my hope that it also reflects the beginning of more concerted efforts that will lead to a reduction in the number of COVID cases and the positivity rate. Thank you.

Seeking Your Input

The Governing Board is preparing to approve [calendars for the next four school years](#), and we would like to know what you think about them. We invite you to contribute your thoughts through a [Thoughtexchange conversation](#) that you can take part in until 8 a.m., Monday, January 25. The Board will take up the administration's calendar proposal for the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years at its special meeting on January 26.

The Board has also begun the process of establishing a budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2021. [The Board received an initial briefing](#) on the budget landscape it will be dealing with that includes a possible \$4 million shortfall, mostly attributable to a COVID-related loss in student enrollment and unanticipated spending on virus mitigation and distance learning equipment. A virtual Town Hall on the budget, [viewable here](#), took place last evening. Strategies are being developed that will help the District minimize the anticipated shortfall, and we would like you to weigh in on them through a [Thoughtexchange](#) that is open through Thursday, January 28 or on [Let's Talk](#) anytime.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you,

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