



March 26, 2021

Hello again, SUSD Families,

We hope you have had a good week! It has been a busy one, here at SUSD, as we get down to the business of the fourth quarter, firmly focused on supporting our students' educational journeys, sharing our excitement for learning with them and seeing them soar. As we begin to tackle the state assessment season and prepare our graduating seniors for their next challenges, we are also helping our middle and high school student athletes create that fine balance that is needed between their academic responsibilities and the pursuit of their spring sport of choice.

We know there have been many questions about the new Executive Order issued yesterday. You can read more about it in the Superintendent's section below. Please note that yesterday's order did not address the mitigation efforts that are required by public and charter schools and did nothing to undo what we, as a school district, are required to do under other, previous orders from the Governor's Office and by the Arizona Department of Health Services with regard to the wearing of facemasks by students and staff while at school. SUSD will continue to enforce these requirements.

At its April 6 meeting, the SUSD Governing Board will consider implementation of a voluntary COVID-19 testing as part of an enhanced mitigation strategy on our campuses. Having a sufficient number of families agree to their students' participation in the voluntary testing is essential to this endeavor. If you have not done so already, please complete the consent form linked on the [Campus Surveillance Testing page](#) of the SUSD website. You can also find FAQs about the plan there. If you do not wish to participate, no further action is required.

Strategic Planning

We are still gathering your thoughts on behalf of the Strategic Planning Design Team on key words or phrases you believe should be part of SUSD's Mission and Vision statements. We invite you to take part in the ongoing [ThoughtExchange](#) on the subject. Thank you for contributing to SUSD's future in this way!

Weekly COVID-19 Update from Supt. Menzel

Yesterday, Governor Ducey issued [Executive Order 2021-06](#), which removed many of the requirements previously placed on businesses related to COVID mitigation strategies. These included removing restrictions on the numbers of people that can gather, as well as giving businesses flexibility with respect to the mask mandates. Many people quickly assumed that this meant that wearing masks at school would also be optional. However, as noted in our separate communication yesterday, although the Governor's Executive Order repealed several prior orders, it did not repeal [Executive Order 2020-51](#), which is the one in which he required all school districts to have a face covering policy. It is important to note that while our COVID numbers (both in our [SUSD zip codes](#) and in Arizona) have dropped significantly, we are still listed as being in the 'Substantial' transmission phase, using the CDC's updated metrics. It is my hope that we do not see an increase in cases as a result of the decision to shift from requirements for businesses to recommendations, given our priority has been to do everything we can to ensure we are able to continue safely offering in-person instruction for those who want and need it. The number of known [active COVID cases](#) in our schools continues to remain low, which is another encouraging sign.

As we head into the final two months of the school year, we are carefully considering opportunities to resume certain activities that were paused as a result of COVID. This includes allowing proms to be scheduled with enhanced mitigation strategies and planning for in-person graduation ceremonies, with some restrictions on the number of attendees to allow for physical distancing while also ensuring the Class of 2021 has a graduation experience that is in-person. I am hopeful that our SUSD zip codes will soon be in the ‘Moderate’ transmission phase, which will allow us to continue slowly reintroducing other activities while still maintaining our layered mitigation strategies to avoid a sudden spike in cases. By taking deliberate and careful measures, I believe we will finish this school year on a positive note and be ready for a great start to the 2021-22 school year.

Teaching and Learning in a Pandemic

This has been a most challenging year. We are now entering a period of time where we are implementing standardized testing. While the state and federal governments have removed the high-stakes aspect of the testing (schools won’t receive letter grades based on testing this year), we are still required to administer the test. My hope is that we will look at this as an opportunity to better understand the impact of the COVID disruption, so we can continue to address the learning needs of our students. Over the past month, an accelerated learning team has convened to plan summer school learning opportunities designed to help those students who have fallen behind to get back on track.

While all of us have been impacted by COVID, that impact varies by student and family. Some have suffered the pain of the loss of a loved one, others are in homes where jobs have been lost or people have remained isolated in order to protect vulnerable family members. It is important to acknowledge this reality, extend grace to our students and colleagues, and focus our attention on the next steps in supporting our students and the District on the path to educational success. Thank you.

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Tax Credit

Tax season is upon us, so should you still be in the midst of your preparations, we would like to suggest a recipient of your good will: SUSD! Invest in your students and their schools by making a tax credit contribution. Schools depend on tax credit contributions to fund programs and activities that the state and District cannot, such as the arts, athletics, field trips, tutoring, enrichment, and college and career testing.

Arizona law allows taxpayers to receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit of up to \$200 for individual filers and up to \$400 for married filers. Contributions made through April 15 can be claimed on either your 2020 state tax return or be applied to your 2021 return. Please note that while the I.R.S. has extended the federal filing deadline again this year, the Arizona deadline remains April 15. Find out more about this win-win-win - for you, your students and their schools – on the SUSD website at <https://www.susd.org/Support>.

Thank you, and wish you and your families a great weekend!

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