



April 30, 2021

Dear Scottsdale Unified Parents and Guardians,

This week, we celebrated the work and service of the district's 80 school bus drivers. Next week, **May 3 – 7**, is **Teacher Appreciation Week** and **School Lunch Hero Day** falls on **May 7**, a week from today. Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD) could not possibly have functioned without the dedication of both of these notable employee groups during the past year. However many challenges you know they have been confronted with – and risen to – since March 2020, there have also been many more. We are forever indebted to our teachers and Nutrition Services personnel for helping SUSD continue to carry out its mission of educating, nurturing and supporting your children, our students. We encourage you to mark their special days next week!

SUSD Committee Hub

As our school district plans for the future, both short-range and long-range, there are opportunities for you to help craft it through the work of district committees. At www.susd.org/Committees, you will find a list of newly established working committees that are in need of your perspective as parents in the weeks and months ahead. Currently, we are looking for volunteers to serve on the [Special Education Task Force Summer Work Group](#) and the [Testing Calendar Work Group](#). If you are interested in contributing to these panels' important work, please consider volunteering your time and talents. Interest forms can be found and submitted directly from the committees' pages linked above. Future opportunities to participate in SUSD's textbook adoption process will also be found on the www.susd.org/Committees page when they occur.

Our goal is to gather a wide range of individuals who represent diverse community perspectives to participate on these district committees. Some will meet only a few times over a matter of months, while others may have a larger scope of work and greater time commitments. We are hopeful that our parents, community members and staff will find this a useful way to volunteer to support the district.

68th Street Proposal

Earlier this month, the Governing Board authorized district legal counsel to negotiate a multi-year lease agreement with Phoenix Rising FC, the Valley's professional soccer team, for the use of the former Tonalea Elementary School property at 6801 E. Oak St., Scottsdale. The team would like to house its youth soccer program at the former school site and further improve the property with amenities for neighbors' use, including a health and fitness track around the site's perimeter and a new playground. The sole remaining school building, with its colorful tile mosaic, would also be restored and made available for community use. SUSD will host a **community meeting** about the Phoenix Rising proposal on **Thursday, May 13 at 6 p.m.** You are invited to attend the meeting in person in the Governing Board Room at Coronado High School, 7501 E. Virginia Ave., Scottsdale, (*masks are required*) or virtually at <http://bit.ly/68thStMeetingMay13>. District and Phoenix Rising officials will be there to explain the project more fully.

Weekly Report from Supt. Menzel

COVID Update

The metrics for our [15 zip codes](#) reflect a decrease in the number of cases per 100,000 and positivity rate from the prior week, while still keeping us in the Substantial transmission area. It is nice to see the slowly increasing trend reverse, although that isn't the case in all areas of the county since some school districts (including Queen Creek and Higley) are in the Red or High transmission category now. The Governing Board and I have been receiving quite a few emails and Let's Talk dialogues regarding what to expect for next fall. I will provide more information during the Superintendent's Comments at the Governing Board meeting on Tuesday, but I had a chance to talk with Dr. Sunenshine this week, along with hearing from officials at both HonorHealth and Mayo Clinic. Based on what we know today, it is likely that SUSD will not need to have a mask mandate when we start school in the fall. I've been saying that this is our hope for some time, and information shared by health officials has given me further confidence that they are seeing the trends moving in a manner that will allow us to proceed accordingly. They noted statistical modeling, along with increased vaccinations (including 12-15 year olds beginning in mid-May) as part of the reason for seeing this as a next step on the return to "normal."

Early this week, the CDC issued [new guidance](#) for people who are fully vaccinated. This new guidance will likely have a positive impact on our planned in-person graduation ceremonies, all of which will take place outside. It is also a good reminder that as more and more people get vaccinated, we can accelerate the return to normal in our community. The HonorHealth and Mayo Clinic leaders noted that hospitalizations are down significantly from their January highs and, with few exceptions, those who are still being hospitalized with COVID are individuals who have not been vaccinated. For those who may have chosen to wait on a vaccine or who have children who are 16 and older, the new vaccination site at WestWorld is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily for COVID-19 shots.

Final Thoughts

As mentioned at the beginning of today's letter, the first week in May is designated as Teacher Appreciation Week. Earlier this week, during our Strategic Planning Design Team meeting, Dr. Connie Kamm shared this video regarding imagining [a world without teachers](#). It is a true testament to the life-changing impact teachers have on students and worth a few minutes of your time to watch. Teaching is a noble profession that has a profound impact on our community and society. It isn't an easy job, and too many times people are quick to criticize without understanding what it takes to help a student learn to read or master a quadratic equation. While it is my hope that every day our teachers feel appreciated and valued for the amazing work they do, I tip my cap to each one of our SUSD teachers and instructional staff, and ask you to join me in doing the same.

Have a wonderful weekend, SUSD!

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