



May 14, 2021

Hello again, Scottsdale Unified Families,

As we close in on the end of the school year, it is good to see more and more signs of returning to normal.

Weekly Report from Supt. Menzel

COVID Update

The data for our [15 zip codes](#) this week reflects a small decline in cases per 100,000 and a slight uptick in the % positivity, but overall we are holding steady with the percent positivity remaining in the Low category and the cases per 100,000 in the Substantial transmission range. Fortunately, we are continuing to see low numbers of confirmed active cases on our campuses.

As many of you know, yesterday the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced a significant change in guidance related to what people who are [fully vaccinated](#) can do safely. Specifically, the announcement indicated that people who are **fully vaccinated** no longer need to wear masks outdoors or indoors in most circumstances. Some of the exceptions include when traveling (bus, train or plane) and in hospitals. The CDC also indicated that individuals still need to comply with local business or workplace guidance. There are a couple of important points to highlight with respect to what this means for SUSD: First, until Thursday of this week, only individuals 16 and older were able to be fully vaccinated and the new approval for 12-15 year olds will not result in more students being fully vaccinated before the end of the school year on May 27. Secondly, our younger students will not be eligible for the vaccine for some time and we still have some staff who have not been fully vaccinated. Accordingly, through the end of the school year, we will still require students and staff to wear masks when indoors, allowing for a mask-free option when students are at recess or outdoor P.E., per previous guidance. Many of us (including me) are ready to move beyond mask wearing, but the guidance from public health officials only applies to individuals who are fully vaccinated. In order to avoid confusion and sending mixed messages, we are choosing to stay the course through the end of the school year in nine more school days' time.

We continue to be asked about what to expect for next school year:

It is the plan of the Scottsdale Unified School District to start the 2021-22 school year with masks being optional.

This is based on a number of factors, including the availability of vaccinations for individuals who are 12 and older and the continued, positive movement toward a return-to-normal in our daily lives. We are encouraging our students and families to get vaccinated, since that is an essential part of the community effort to continue slowing the spread of COVID and reducing the severity of illness when it is contracted. Emerging research provides evidence of the effectiveness of the vaccines in the general population (beyond the initial studies), and SUSD is working with local health providers to ensure ease of access for those who may live in areas where getting the vaccine could be a challenge. As always, the district will continue to work with public health officials related to any potential changes in their guidance due to new information, but we want to let you know what to expect as we plan for the next school year. "Mask optional" means that we may still

have students and staff who choose to wear masks. It is my hope that we can respect their choices as individuals as together we navigate our “new normal” in the post-pandemic world.

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There are now vaccine options for anyone age 12 and up, with more places than ever offering vaccinations – they are easy to find, convenient and free. The CDC also allows COVID-19 vaccines to be given at the same time as other vaccines, so you don't have to wait 14 days anymore.

The COVID-19 vaccine is readily available throughout the SUSD community and Maricopa County. You can find it at large vaccination sites, like [WestWorld](#); pharmacies, like Walgreens, Fry's and Safeway; healthcare providers; federally qualified health centers; worksites; and many local "pop-up" sites. Visit [Maricopa.gov/COVID19VaccineLocations](https://www.maricopa.gov/COVID19VaccineLocations) to search for a vaccination provider or clinic location near you. The map lets you search by ZIP code and even by vaccine type. In many locations, like WestWorld, appointments are not required.

When looking for an appointment for yourself or a family member, remember:

- The Pfizer vaccine is authorized for anyone age 12 and up.
- The Moderna vaccine and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are authorized for anyone age 18 and up.

Have questions about the different types of COVID-19 vaccines and how they were developed? Get them answered here - <https://www.flowcode.com/page/takecaremaricopa> - or speak to your trusted family physician for specific recommendations.

68th Street Property Update

Last night, more than 200 neighbors of the former Tonalea Elementary school site took part in a second community meeting regarding the proposal from Phoenix Rising FC to develop the property for its youth soccer program and community use. While the proposal is still in the development phase, people spoke passionately both for and against the project. At the meeting's conclusion, an advisory vote of those attending in person and virtually was taken: 140 individuals expressed support for moving forward with the development of the Phoenix Rising plan, 86 did not want it to move forward and 6 people were undecided. Previously, the SUSD Governing Board directed our legal counsel to begin the process of negotiating a contract with Phoenix Rising. One element that arose from last night's discussion is the need for any final agreement with the team to further refine and clarify SUSD expectations regarding the project's benefit for our students.

In-person SUSD Graduation Events

We're getting excited to celebrate commencement exercises in person with our Class of 2021 during the last week of May! Find the schedule at www.susd.org/Graduation.

Other SUSD Celebrations

Last month, we told you about Anasazi Elementary School's national award-winning P.E. teacher Kyle Bragg. Last week, Kyle was interviewed on Arizona PBS 8's local news show, *Horizon*. If you missed it, [take a look at](#) the extra mile just one of SUSD's outstanding teachers goes to to make instruction meaningful and inspirational for students. The interview starts at the 18:14 minute mark.

And on Tuesday this week, we were happy to see another sign of a return to tradition, albeit virtual, with the [Scottsdale Charros' annual celebration](#) of outstanding SUSD students and educators. It is well worth catching up on our trusted community partner's work on behalf of our school district.

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