



October 30, 2020

Hello, Scottsdale Unified Families.

COVID Update from Dr. Menzel

Last Friday I provided information regarding three of our SUSD zip codes that had one of the benchmark indicators return to the “red” category. That information created a fair amount of concern from our community since several of the schools in the identified zip codes had zero or very few COVID cases. Parents and some staff couldn’t understand why a school would need to close if they had no cases, even if the ADHS benchmark metric was red again. Quietly the ADHS modified its guidance to schools changing their recommendation regarding a return to virtual education from one benchmark indicator being red to all three being red. This was a shock to the education community and has received a lot of attention in the media throughout the week. In my conversations with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health officials, they expressed concern regarding whether or not the third indicator (the COVID-like illness hospitalization metric) would ever turn red. However, notwithstanding the change in the ADHS guidance, the bottom line for SUSD is that we will continue to consult with MCPDH officials using the benchmark data and school-based factors to make a determination if/when a school would need to be closed.

The form for reporting on the [15 SUSD zip codes](#) has been updated and modified in an attempt to make it more understandable. Although the 85253 zip code now reflects the case rate being above 100/100,000 for two consecutive weeks, the **MCDPH is still not recommending any school closures** based on the fact that we don’t have evidence of spread within our schools and the other factors we’ve discussed previously. *In fact, our mitigation strategies appear to be working which is a testament to your efforts. Thank you!*

As we continue to navigate the process of notifying families and staff regarding “close contact” and general exposure, we were encountering delays in receiving confirmation from the Health Department before we were given the approval to notify close contacts to quarantine. In some cases this approval came more than a week after the case was reported and resulted in quarantine letters where the majority of the quarantine time had already passed. Earlier this week we were able to review and revise this process with the Health Department. Now, once we have written confirmation of a positive case (antigen or PCR test and not antibody), we can immediately notify close contacts without waiting for county officials to complete their review. While there are still a couple of cases pending from the old process, this new arrangement will allow us to communicate with families and in a timely manner.

Celebrate Responsibly

We are receiving many reports from parents about parties and large gatherings of students happening on the weekend. With Halloween this weekend, we are asking that you please remind your student to avoid any unnecessary large gatherings. If they do decide to celebrate Halloween, please keep in mind the best practices to include wearing a face mask over the nose and mouth and allowing a safe physical distance. We are concerned that large gatherings of students can quickly increase our COVID-19 cases in our schools, which could threaten our ability to deliver on-campus instruction and activities. We thank you and your student(s) for your efforts to help reduce the spread of COVID.

COVID-19 Case Counts and Metrics by Zip Code

Our COVID-19-related information is all publicly accessible, online and available for you 24/7. The one official source of the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 status of the District is found at www.susd.org/COVID19. Here are a few highlights of what is available in that section of our website:

- **Briefings:** The official copies of the District office weekly briefings to SUSD parents. This page is directly accessible at www.susd.org/Briefings.

- **Campus Closures:** In the event there is a closure of any SUSD campus, it would be listed on this page immediately. This page is directly accessible at www.susd.org/Closures.
- **COVID-19 Case Dashboard:** A detailed count of current and past, known, lab-confirmed COVID-19 case counts by building. This data is updated weekly, on Fridays. It is directly accessible at www.susd.org/Dashboard.
- **COVID-19 Response Plan:** A detailed description of how SUSD will respond when a known case of COVID-19 is identified or when contact with a suspected case happens. This page is directly accessible at www.susd.org/COVIDPlan.
- **Metrics:** Health metrics by zip code, updated each week, on Thursdays. This page is directly accessible at www.susd.org/Metrics.

Have Questions About COVID-19?

If you have questions about COVID-19 and how it relates to your student(s), MCDPH has three options available to assist you and answer your questions:

- **Parent/Guardian FAQs:** This [online resource](#) is the best place to start for information.
- **Call 2-1-1:** Speak to someone directly using the new MCDPH hotline. Dial 2-1-1, then press option 6 for COVID-19, and then option 3 to connect to a Parent Hotline staff member.
- **Email MCDPH:** Submit your questions through this [email form](#).

Middle School Athletics – Middle School Athletics are underway, and we appreciate that all of our participants are wearing masks, social distancing when possible and adhering to all our safety protocols. The Fall Festival will take place on Saturday, Nov. 7 at various locations around the District. Schedules have been provided to the athletes by their schools. Due to the configuration of boys' basketball in our gyms, and for safety purposes, we will not have spectators at those indoor Festival games. We will be able to host spectators at soccer and softball, and request that only 2 family members per participant attend.

During the Tier 2 competitive season, spectators will be permitted for all sports, but, again, it will be limited to 2 family members per athlete. Masks and social distancing are required on our campuses by athletes and spectators alike. Thank you in advance for modeling safe behaviors for our student athletes. We appreciate everyone's understanding as we navigate the challenges associated with COVID to make athletic opportunities available to our students.

Thank you for your continued support of your student, and for your cooperation with our health and safety guidelines.

Respectfully,

Scottsdale Unified School District [Leadership Team](#)

P.S. **Remember ...**

- We expect staff and students to wear masks while on school campuses, buses and SUSD property.
- Hand washing, physical distancing and cleaning are some of the other activities we are undertaking each day to make sure students and employees are safe.
- We encourage family members to remain in the vehicle when dropping off/picking up students.
- If someone does step out of a vehicle on school grounds, they are expected to wear a mask, in compliance with the [Maricopa County regulation](#) requiring face coverings.
- Recognize any [symptoms of illness](#) in your child and report them to the school nurse.
- **Do not send your child to school if they are exhibiting any signs of COVID-like illness or have been exposed to COVID-19 or have been confirmed to have COVID-19.**