



November 6, 2020

Hello, Scottsdale Unified Families.

We hope this letter finds your family healthy. As we move closer to the holiday season, we'd like to ask for your cooperation with monitoring student and family members for signs of illness, such as cold, flu and COVID-19. If you do observe any signs of illness in your household, we ask that you please keep your student off campus. As a reminder, we have an EDL (Enhanced Distance Learning) system that ensures that your students continue to learn if they must temporarily join their classmates remotely.

COVID Update from Dr. Menzel

We are continuing to work closely with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) with respect to cases that are reported in our buildings (both students and staff), along with reviewing the benchmark metrics that signal the level of community spread. This week, for the first time since this summer, our district (aggregating all [15 zip codes](#)) reported case counts higher than 100/100,000. The positivity rate is still at 5.86%, which is below the 10% threshold that signifies substantial community spread. To reiterate what I've shared previously, MCDPH recommends consultation when benchmark indicators return to red, which is something we've been doing for the past month and will continue to do. Decisions about whether and when to return to virtual learning will be made on a case-by-case basis. At this point, [our schools](#) still are not a place where COVID infection is spreading, and that is very encouraging news. At the same time, we are concerned about the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday and the potential that families will be traveling or gathering in larger groups, which may elevate the risk. I asked the health department to consider issuing guidance that would ask families to voluntarily quarantine for 14 days following the holiday if they choose to travel in order to minimize the potential that returning students and/or staff contribute to an additional spike in cases. We are committed to looking at additional mitigation strategies so we are able to keep our schools open.

Second Semester Planning

On November 4, the SUSD Governing Board reviewed and approved the [second semester instructional plan](#). You can watch the Board's discussion on the [SUSD YouTube channel](#). If your student is currently in Scottsdale Online Learning or Enhanced Distance Learning, your student's school will send you additional communication and a commitment form through which you will indicate the method of learning you select for the remainder of this school year. Choices for second semester learning models are due by midnight on November 12. Your selection is a critical piece of data we need to be able to adjust staffing.

2021-2022 School Year Calendar

Wondering when school will begin in August 2021? A planning committee began meeting this week to bring a recommendation to the SUSD Governing Board in January for the 2021-2022 school year. The committee will be communicating with stakeholder groups to gather input over the next few weeks. If you would like to share your thoughts on next school year's calendar with us, you can do that through the District's "Let's Talk" application at www.susd.org/LetsTalk by selecting "Teaching and Learning."

Athletics -

High School: The AIA recently released guidance to member schools regarding their ability, or inability, to begin winter sports on Monday. Because the schools in Maricopa County did not meet COVID-19 metrics recommended by the AIA's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, SUSD will pause the official Monday, Nov. 9 start of practice for our winter sports: basketball, soccer and wrestling. The AIA guidance impacts multiple school districts around the state, including SUSD. Fall sports currently underway are not affected, as the AIA has indicated those seasons can continue until their conclusion. We will continue to work with the AIA and monitor the metrics in our efforts to

begin the winter sports seasons. We recognize how disappointing this may be for athletes and families, and we appreciate your understanding. If you have any questions, please contact your coach or school athletic director.

Middle School: We are proceeding with the Middle School Festival tomorrow, November 7. A friendly reminder: No spectators will be permitted in the gymnasiums for safety reasons tomorrow. On Monday, November 9, along with the high schools, we will pause the Tier 2 competitive season due to current COVID-19 metrics. If we are able to begin winter sports at the high school level, we will attempt to also resume the Quarter 2 competitive schedule for our middle schools. Thank you for understanding as we navigate the never-ending challenges presented to education by the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have any questions, please contact your coach or school athletic director.

Substitutes

Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD) is now offering the opportunity for community members to receive an Emergency Substitute Certification to become a temporary substitute for SUSD. If you are interested in becoming a substitute teacher, please visit [susd.org/jobs](https://www.susd.org/jobs) or contact Karly Meza at kmeza@susd.org for more information. Requirements to apply for temporary certification include a high school diploma and a fingerprint clearance card. An Emergency Substitute Certificate will allow you to substitute for 120 days for one school year. Substitute Certifications, on a non-emergency basis, can be obtained with a bachelor's degree and a fingerprint clearance card, and are valid for six years.

Official SUSD COVID-19 Website

The only official source on the internet for SUSD's COVID-19 status is our website 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.

A reminder that next Wednesday, November 11, is Veterans Day, and school will not be in session. We want to express our gratitude for the service and sacrifice to this great nation made by those of you in our community who are veterans and who have veterans in your families. Thank you!

Respectfully,

Scottsdale Unified School District [Leadership Team](#)