



December 4, 2020

Hello, Scottsdale Unified Families.

There is no getting around it: This week has been a most difficult one for our district, and the kind of week we have been working so diligently to avoid since returning to in-person learning in mid-September. We have known, and have been consistent in relating to you, that decisions related to our ability to continue offering in-person learning are made on a building-by-building basis that consider numerous factors and that they are made in consultation with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH). The decisions made this week were by no means made lightly. We are grateful for the community members who continue to implement mitigation strategies that help the District manage these increasingly difficult times. Families voluntarily self-quarantined 377 SUSD students this week because of Thanksgiving holiday travel.

### **COVID Update from Dr. Menzel**

The new data for our [15 zip codes](#) includes expected increases in the number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000, but a surprise decline in the positivity percentage across the District. While the case number is high, it means we still haven't reached red status for the percent positivity or COVID-like illnesses, in the aggregate, although we have seen a few zip codes reach that threshold in two of the three categories. It is important to remember that we review the benchmark indicators **and** conduct a building-by-building analysis, which includes considering the number of active cases in a building, evidence of transmission within the building, and availability of staff to safely operate in-person instruction. Each week we update our [COVID dashboard data](#). This week includes data from last Wednesday through yesterday (the week prior was a shortened reporting period, due to the Thanksgiving holiday).

Earlier this week, the CDC released [updated guidance](#) for quarantine related to close contact COVID exposure. Our partners at MCDPH have indicated we should have revised guidelines from them early next week. Subsequently, SUSD will update its processes. The rationale for reducing the quarantine period from 14 days to 10 is to improve compliance. Additionally, most people who are exposed become symptomatic in the first 5-7 days following exposure, so while all risk isn't eliminated, the majority of people who may be infected as a result of being a close contact will be discovered within the new quarantine period. There is also a provision for a 7-day return if a person has a negative PCR or antigen test after the fifth day following exposure and is symptom free, but tracking this may prove to be very difficult. We will post updated guidance on the [SUSD website](#) when it is available.

It is expected that COVID vaccines will begin to arrive in Arizona in mid-December. The first people to receive the vaccine (those in what's being called the 1A group) will include health professionals such as school nurses, first responders, and individuals in long-term care facilities. The second priority group (1B) includes teachers and school staff. The vaccination process includes two shots administered 3-4 weeks apart. In Scottsdale, a drive-thru vaccination location is being set up that can complete 1,000 vaccinations a day. This partnership between the city, Honor Health, and Mayo Clinic has ensured Scottsdale is prepared to begin the process as soon as the vaccines arrive. Governor Ducey indicated earlier this week that these should be free to all Arizona residents. It is too early to tell when the 1B group will be able to sign up and begin getting vaccinated, but it is an encouraging development.

### **Athletics Update**

While our middle school sports programs continue to be paused, high schools continue with AIA winter sports - soccer, basketball and wrestling. SUSD is coordinating with Embry Women's Health to provide mandatory, free, random COVID-19 weekly testing for those athletes who make winter competition teams. We are also continuing our COVID-19 safety protocols of symptoms logs, temperature checks and requiring those who do not feel well to stay home. The AIA, with the input of its Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, has determined that there will be no spectators allowed at games statewide if we are able to compete after the winter recess. If you have specific questions about athletics, please contact your school coach or athletic director.

## COVID-19 Testing

If you are looking for COVID-19 testing, many convenient locations continue to be available.

SUSD has partnered with Embry Women’s Health to conduct zero-cost, COVID-19 testing five days a week at [our Oak facility](#) at 7501 E. Oak St., Scottsdale. The drive-thru clinic is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. It conducts several different kinds of COVID testing. Results are reported within 36 – 72 hours. Embry also has many other testing locations around the Valley. Find them at <https://embrywomenshealth.com/testing-blitz/>.

Maricopa County and Banner Health Urgent Care have teamed up to offer COVID-19 testing at no cost to anyone who may have been exposed to someone who is, or suspected to be, COVID-19 positive. Appointments must be made ahead of time online using this link: <https://urgentcare.bannerhealth.com/>. COVID-19 testing and drive-through flu shots are also being offered at the Arizona State Fairgrounds. Registration is required ahead of time [at this link](#) or by calling 844-549-1851. Insurance information will be requested; however, you will not be asked for any out-of-pocket payment or co-pay.

Other community COVID-19 options include:

- [ASU Saliva Testing](#) (scroll down on page for site locations)
- [City of Phoenix Mobile Testing Sites](#)
- [CVS Pharmacy Retail Testing Sites](#)
- [Walgreens Pharmacy Drive-Thru Sites](#)

## Maricopa County’s COVID Parent Hotline

For more questions or concerns about COVID-19, including testing, contact the Maricopa County Department of Health’s parent information center at [COVIDparenthotlione@maricopa.gov](mailto:COVIDparenthotlione@maricopa.gov) or dial 2-1-1, select option 6 (for COVID-19) and then option 3 (for the COVID Parent Hotline).

## Former Tonalea 68<sup>th</sup> Street Property

Development of the former Tonalea Elementary School property at 68<sup>th</sup> Street and Oak will be the topic of discussion at an in-person and virtual community meeting that will take place next Thursday, December 10. Phoenix Rising FC, the Valley’s professional soccer team, has approached the District about the possibility of using the former school site as a practice facility. Read more about the 6 p.m. meeting at the Mohave District Annex, 8500 E. Jackrabbit Rd., Scottsdale, and online [here](#).

## Questions, Comments or Need Assistance? Let’s Talk!

We appreciate the opportunity to hear directly from you. We also know you appreciate a direct response from the person at SUSD who is best equipped and empowered to provide you with the right information. That’s why we ask that you submit questions, comments and suggestions through the Let’s Talk app on our website at [www.susd.org/LetsTalk](http://www.susd.org/LetsTalk).

Scottsdale Unified School District [Leadership Team](#)

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Remember – there is only one official source of SUSD COVID-19 information on the internet: the SUSD website at [www.susd.org/COVID19](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.susd.org/Metrics).