



January 15, 2021

Dear Scottsdale Unified Families,

First off, please note that there is no school on Monday, January 18, while we join the nation in celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We are looking forward to welcoming back our in-person-instructed middle school and high school students on Tuesday, January 19!

The three-day weekend poses the possibility, once again, that you will travel outside of your family ‘pods’ and potentially incur the risk of being exposed to COVID-19. We remain committed – on behalf of your students and our teachers and school staff – to safe, on-campus, in-person learning for those families that have chosen it. As a result, we find ourselves once again *highly encouraging* you to self-quarantine upon your return so as to minimize the possibility of introducing the coronavirus in our schools. We also respectfully request that you and your families take every recommended, public health precaution at all times when you are out and about – wear a mask, wash your hands frequently and physically distance yourselves from those not in your pod.

Also, please remember that if you detect any possible COVID-19 symptoms in your family, such as a fever of 100°F. or more, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, headache, body or muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell, *please* keep your students and yourselves home. Despite the arrival of a vaccine, it will be some time before its distribution works itself through the designated population groups, and some groups will never be eligible for it. That is why we continue to ask you for your help to defeat COVID-19 in the SUSD community. We’re all in this together!

For EDL Parents

Please be sure that while your child participates in EDL learning that you continue staying in touch with your home school to report absences from remote learning, illness and positive COVID diagnoses, which should be reported as soon as possible to your school’s nurse. This information is essential to District efforts to track students’ EDL attendance and being able to excuse absences due to any kind of illness, not just COVID-19; assisting SUSD in tracking COVID activity in our community; and allowing students with a positive diagnosis to be exempt from quarantine for a 90-day period when they return to learning in-person. Thank you!

Weekly Update from Supt. Menzel

COVID-19

Yesterday, the [benchmark data](#) for SUSD’s 15 zip codes was updated. We remain red in all three categories, and the number of cases per 100,000, as well as the positivity rate, increased significantly this past week. Following the second week of in-person instruction at our elementary schools, our [cases](#) have remained relatively low, although we have had two schools where outbreak letters have been required: Laguna (Pre-K, 2 cases) and Pima (an SCA class with 2 cases and a 3rd grade class with 2 cases).

This week, a committee met to begin the conversation regarding enhancing our school-by-school criteria for when a building should return to virtual education. I appreciate the thoughtful questions

and comments of the committee members. A sub-committee volunteered to continue developing a recommendation for Governing Board consideration. An update on the progress of this group will be provided at the Governing Board meeting on January 19.

After the data was updated yesterday, I reached out to my colleagues in the North Valley Education Consortium to see whether they were considering any modifications to in-person learning. At this time, none of them are proposing changes and, with the exception of Fountain Hills and Cave Creek, they all have benchmark data that is higher than what we have at SUSD. These districts (except PVUSD, which has been remote since November 23 and has higher benchmark metrics than SUSD) are all following a school-by-school approach and carefully monitoring cases to address any potential spread within a school. I also checked in with Mesa and most of their schools are returning, as planned, next Tuesday, although seven will remain remote and a few others will be on a two-day schedule. Each district in the Valley is struggling to balance the challenges associated with community spread and the importance of providing in-person instruction.

Vaccination Update

As a result of a partnership with HonorHealth, Scottsdale Unified and Paradise Valley Unified School Districts have specific days (January 22-24 for the first dose and February 12-14 for the second dose) where our employees are prioritized for vaccinations. SUSD had more than **1,950** staff members who expressed an interest in getting the vaccination through this partnership. Several other employees took advantage of opportunities at the State Farm Stadium location or other PODs to schedule earlier appointments. I am grateful for our partnership with HonorHealth and that our educators have been prioritized in the distribution cycle. Please be aware that a week from today, Friday, January 22, students may have asynchronous assignments so that we can accommodate our teachers with Friday vaccination appointments. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Strategic Planning

One of the top priorities for the Governing Board (after navigating the COVID challenges) is to engage in a meaningful strategic planning process. The district has hired Kamm Solutions to assist in facilitating the work. There are three phases in the process:



It is important to have multiple opportunities for our internal staff and external partners (families, community members, businesses, local government, etc.) to share their hopes and aspirations for the future of Scottsdale Unified School District. However, it is also necessary to have a group that is diverse and representative of a broad cross-sector of interests to serve on a **Strategic Plan Design Team**, so this group will have 45-60 members. I invite you to apply to serve on the design team. The [application](#) is due by Friday, January 22 at 5 p.m. Individuals interested in serving will need to commit to regular meeting attendance, reading materials

in advance, and responding to requests for feedback. Please return your completed application to [Gladys Wagoner](#).

I am excited to begin turning our attention to the future of SUSD and look forward to the next steps in the process and engaging with our community to articulate a clear and compelling vision of success for our Scottsdale Unified students. Thank you.

Athletics Update

High Schools – After several more hours of discussion, the Arizona Interscholastic Association voted 5-4 this week to resume Arizona high school winter sports - with modifications. Athletes will be required to wear a mask at all times and spectators, who will also be required to wear masks, will be limited to two parents/guardians per player at home games. SUSD will sell game/match tickets to our parents/guardians electronically at gofan.co. Spectators are also requested to leave campus immediately after the conclusion of the game they're attending. For those who are unable to attend, live streaming options are available at nfhsnetwork.com. We appreciate your understanding and flexibility during the challenges presented to high school athletics by COVID-19. If you have any questions, please contact the school coach or athletic director.

Middle Schools – Third quarter middle school sports - girls basketball, boys flag football, cross country and Spiritline - remain cancelled.

Nutrition Services

With our middle schools and high schools reopening on Tuesday, we want to make sure you know that nutritious grab-and-go lunches are available to your students as they head home each day, thanks to the USDA. ALL children under the age of 18 are eligible to receive FREE meals from SUSD Nutrition Services through the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. Also, our free, weekly, curbside meal distribution service continues on Wednesday mornings at Oak Learning Academy, 7501 E. Oak St., Scottsdale, between 7 and 9:30 a.m. We provide “7-Day Meal Bundles” that include 7 days’ worth of breakfasts, lunches, snacks and suppers. Meals are free to any child in the community. No qualification is necessary. See www.susd.org/Meals for complete details.

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

We always like hearing directly from you and believe you like hearing directly from the person at SUSD who is best equipped to provide you with the right information. That’s what our Let’s Talk website app is for! Submit your questions, comments and suggestions at www.susd.org/LetsTalk.

Thank you, and please remember to “Mask up, SUSD”!

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

Arizona Department of Health Services COVID-19 vaccination information:

Starting Tuesday, Jan. 19, those in groups prioritized for vaccination can register for available appointments at State Farm Stadium and multiple other vaccination sites at podvaccine.azdhs.gov. Information about all state vaccination sites across Arizona can be found at azhealth.gov/findvaccine.

COVID-19 testing information:

- Maricopa County/Banner Health Urgent Care – [State Fairgrounds](#); [other Valley locations](#)
- [ASU Saliva Testing](#)
- [City of Phoenix Mobile Testing Sites](#)
- [CVS Pharmacy Retail Testing Sites](#)
- [Embry Women’s Health](#)
- [Walgreens Pharmacy Drive-Thru Sites](#)