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December 20, 2019

Dear Scottsdale Unified School District Families,

The holiday season beckons, but before we depart for Winter Break, I would like to brief you on some school district happenings that I hope you will find as gratifying as I do.

After a year of collaboration and planning with and within the Cherokee Elementary School community, the fences are up and the shovels are ready to go in the ground. We invite you to join us for a ground breaking ceremony for the Cherokee Rebuild on Monday, Jan. 13, 2020 at 9 a.m. at 8801 N. 56<sup>th</sup> St., Paradise Valley. This is the third school rebuild to be undertaken with 2016 bond money, with two more – Hohokam and Kiva – waiting in the wings. Upon its completion in 2021, Cherokee will begin a new era of enhanced teaching and learning capabilities and new opportunities for students that we all are looking forward to seeing. The Hohokam project is on schedule, with architects working on a design that is based on robust community and staff input. The Kiva project will follow.

Two schools in the Coronado Learning Community are the recent recipients of grant funding to bolster postsecondary success and help support the social and emotional needs of students.

- Coronado High School is one of five high schools statewide selected to receive a multi-year, GEAR UP grant. Part of a state and national effort, GEAR UP aims to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to not only enter, but also succeed in college. While details have yet to be worked out with Northern Arizona University, which will oversee the grant, we anticipate Coronado students will receive additional support to improve attendance, drive academic excellence and increase graduation rates, complementing initiatives already in place under the direction of Principal Amy Palatucci.
- Tonalea and Coronado will each receive state funding to add a full-time school social worker on staff. They were selected from among more than 900 applications to receive funding under the FY 2020 state School Safety Program.

I was very proud earlier this month to attend the annual Alli Ortega Empty Bowls event at Scottsdale Community College (SCC). This 20+ year partnership between SUSD schools, Scottsdale Arts, Scottsdale Community Partners and SCC supports the work of Vista del Camino Social Services and the assistance it provides to individuals and families in our community in need. This year, students from Hopi Elementary, Mohave Middle and Coronado High schools contributed beautiful, hand-made bowls to the event

and Mohave's string quartet provided music in the late afternoon. It is wonderful to see students of all ages contributing to their community in such a meaningful way. Many SUSD students and schools conduct charitable efforts throughout the year. It is gratifying to see the compassion for others that is behind all of these efforts, whether it is collecting gift cards for our own SUSD families, donations to Goodwill, pennies for rainforests or plastic bags to be recycled. I know you are as proud of your students as the Governing Board and I are.

There are teacher accolades to pass along to you, as well. Three of our elementary school physical education teachers have been recognized by their state professional organization for their outstanding work in 2019. Arizona Health and Physical Education has named Julie Sparks of Desert Canyon Elementary as the state's Elementary Teacher of the Year and Angela Caruso of Cochise Elementary as Arizona's Adaptive P.E. Teacher of the Year. Kyle Bragg of Anasazi Elementary (and last year's Elementary Teacher of the Year award recipient) received the group's Innovation Award. The goal of physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity, and we are so grateful that these fine educators are leading our P.E. classrooms!

Before we break for the holidays, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to you, our SUSD families, for all of the support, encouragement and effort you have made in 2019 to help your students succeed, to help your schools and to enable the District to continue moving forward in a positive direction.

Thank you for making 2019 a year to remember. Our SUSD team looks forward to welcoming back students, teachers and staff on Monday, Jan. 6, 2020. Happy holidays to you and your families!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Kriekard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

John Kriekard, Ed.D.  
Superintendent