



8500 E. Jackrabbit Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85250

Telephone: 480-484-6100
Website: www.susd.org

February 28, 2020

Dear Scottsdale Unified School District Families,

As you and your students approach a week of well-deserved rest during Spring Break, following another quarter of outstanding accomplishments, your Governing Board has been hard at work performing perhaps its most significant responsibility: that of choosing the District's next leader. That process culminated last week in its unanimous selection of [Dr. Scott Menzel to be our next superintendent](#).

I look forward to working closely with Dr. Menzel over the coming weeks and months as we collaborate to ensure a smooth transition to his administration. I think you will find him innovative, engaging and a good listener, all good qualities in an SUSD superintendent, I'm sure you will agree. When I retire (again!) in a few months' time, I know I will be turning over to him a school district that is on solid footing and that enjoys your support through respectful, collaborative work with all stakeholders. I would also like to issue a note of gratitude to the members of the five community committees representing parents, students, teachers, District administrators and classified staff whose invaluable insight last week helped guide the Governing Board to a great decision.

We are aware of community concern regarding the recent outbreak of Coronavirus disease, or COVID-19, and have activated the District's Incident Command Team to ensure we are doing everything we can, proactively, to protect the health and safety of students and staff. This team is specifically trained and resourced to respond to emergencies, and is in regular contact with public health agencies that have the most accurate and up-to-date information on Coronavirus so that we can share that with you. Its mission is to ensure that the District is poised with information, services, staffing and other resources to respond, should any health emergency occur that may affect our student and employee population.

We have also created a new page on the District website to collect, in a single location, outgoing District communications, social media feeds, important links, Frequently Asked Questions and other resources related to COVID-19. Access it directly at www.susd.org/COVID19 or from the Safety icon that appears on the upper right side of our homepage, www.susd.org. In our area, the Maricopa County Public Health Department is the leading authority on Coronavirus. Find its special COVID-19 website at <https://www.maricopa.gov/5460/Novel-Coronavirus>. The most up-to-date national information about Coronavirus can be found on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

I was pleased to greet members of the Desert Mountain Learning Community this week at the fourth of my "Coffee with Kriekard" events. We had a packed house that was engaged for the entire two hours of the event. We talked about the vast array of educational opportunities available overall to SUSD students and to their families and, in particular,

through [Desert Mountain High School's International Baccalaureate \(IB\) Diploma Programme](#). With the work begun last year at [Anasazi Elementary School](#) under its application to offer the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) and [Mountainside Middle School's](#) curriculum development and implementation during the past three years to become an IB Middle Years Program (MYP) school, the Desert Mountain Learning Community offers a complete, world-renowned, international-minded education, from preschool through high school. IB students at all grade levels learn how to create connections between their studies and the real world, building them into highly sought-after, scholarship-worthy, well-rounded, worldly graduates. I commend the educators and principals of these schools for their dedication to making this curriculum continuum a reality for their community.

It's that time of year for the Governing Board to align its goals and initiatives into a cohesive, comprehensive budget for the 2020-2021 school year. Difficult choices lie ahead and funding priorities must be determined, but you should have every confidence, as do I, that your Board will make the very best decisions for your students, their teachers and our schools. Although the final budget is not adopted until June, the Governing Board has already been briefed on a [proposed Capital Outlay spending plan for fiscal 2020-2021](#) and a [projected M&O budget](#) for the new fiscal year that begins July 1. In addition to public sessions on the 2020-2021 budget process that the District held on Jan. 30 and Feb. 27, you can view the public meetings on the budget process on the [District's official YouTube channel](#), read the detailed budget information presented to the Governing Board at [www.susd.org/Board](#) and you may dive into the financials of the school district at [www.susd.org/Budget](#), where we have 10 years of financial data available online for review.

Earlier this month, the Governing Board voted to invest \$1,000,000 to update the District's World Languages textbooks and associated curriculum materials used in the instruction of Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Spanish and French. It has been more than a decade, in some instances, since our middle school and high school students had new world language materials in their hands. As you well know, many innovations have taken place in that time that enhance student learning, specifically through online study opportunities. We are grateful to the District's World Language Adoption Committee, which has worked tirelessly since April 2019 to review state standards, identify student and teacher curriculum gaps and needs, review the latest materials from the curriculum publishing industry and make informed recommendations to the Board. World Languages teachers will familiarize themselves with the new materials through professional development opportunities this spring and summer, as well as through ongoing, online training. Additionally, another instructional materials review is already underway to identify new materials for SUSD's Advanced Placement (Statistics, Calculus, Computer Science) and IB (Analysis & Approaches) mathematics courses, with recommendations to be made to the Board in May. Capital override monies will be used to purchase these materials.

In Scottsdale, it is our great fortune to be able to offer students [accelerated learning opportunities](#), from the beginning of their formal education all the way through high school. Kiva and Redfield Elementary schools are homes to our Gifted Pre-Kindergarten academies, and content enrichment opportunities and accelerated math programs are available to gifted students at all 19 of our elementary grades schools. Highly gifted elementary and middle school students have access to our Comprehensive Gifted Program (CGP) on six campuses, including, beginning next school year, a multi-age, 1st and 2nd grade class at Kiva and a 3rd grade CGP class at Hopi Elementary. Find a schedule of April and May CGP tours [here](#). At the high school level, [Honors and Advanced Placement \(AP\) courses](#) are offered at all five SUSD high schools and [Coronado High School](#) will pilot a new Pre-AP program in the fall that will focus on ensuring that the freshman and sophomore classes are on the path to academic success.

Just as some students require specialized learning opportunities to engage and challenge their minds, parents of gifted children also are in need of some specialized support. Please join SUSD's [Gifted and Accelerated Learning's Parent Institute](#) on March 25 to learn how you can better meet your gifted student's academic, social and emotional needs. Learn more about our district's gifted learning options at www.susd.org/Gifted.

Lastly, I want to remind you that our last round of ['Five Hive' kindergarten Open House events](#) take place next week. We look forward to offering you and your littlest learner a preview of our warm and engaging kindergarten classrooms, and welcoming you to our "hive" of SUSD schools in August!

Have a safe and enjoyable Spring Break.

Respectfully,

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

John Kriekard, Ed.D.
Superintendent