



April 23, 2018

Dear SUSD Families:

First, I must apologize for the tremendous uncertainty that has swirled around our State and community in recent days. It is our mission to deliver a high quality educational experience to every student, every day that school is in session.

In recent days, I've spent many hours evaluating how to effectively manage the situation. I empathize with my professional colleagues, who I respect and admire, for their tireless dedication to the education of our students. Similarly, I have publicly stated my thoughts about honoring our professional duty to serve our students.

I have consulted principal leadership team, senior cabinet members, leadership council, colleagues from around Arizona, and even from other states. I've had individual conversations with members of our Governing Board. We've surveyed both certificated and support staff members. I've gotten feedback from faculty, staff, parents, and community members.

I would like to present you with the results of our recent survey from last week. The simple question asked was, "Will you be participating in the planned walkout on April 26, 2018?" Of 293 teachers surveyed, 57% indicated that they planned to participate in the walkout on Thursday.

We grappled with the data, and considered different contingencies and ideas to try and remain open. I very much want to keep our schools open. However, the weight of the evidence and emerging themes, logistics, and scenarios became clear over time. Our first strategic direction is to maintain safe environments. The preponderance of counsel and data I received suggests that there is reasonable doubt as to our ability to operate schools in a safe manner.

Therefore, I've made a decision to close all of our schools and basic operations, including Early Childhood Center (ECC) and L.I.N.K., for **Thursday, April 26, 2018, and Friday, April 27, 2018**. This process is unfolding and changing each day, and has many variables at many levels. We will provide an update by Saturday, April 28, 2018, through the mass messaging system regarding next week's school operations. Please ensure that your family's contact numbers and information are up to date.

We will be providing regular FAQ updates, but I wanted to share a few points about topics that have been shared with me. First, we will plan to honor and continue with major student events, contingent upon the availability of corresponding staff. Examples of these types of events include athletics, the dance showcase this weekend, College Board Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and the large scale out of state educational excursions currently planned. Second, as previously mentioned, the dates and times of our high school graduation exercises will go on as scheduled. Site administrators will communicate specific details pertaining to individual events.

I am disappointed that this situation has reached this point across our State. The only factor more important than providing education to our students is ensuring their safety and well-being, and I cannot in good faith open our schools with those concerns. Again, I apologize to all of you, and will work to support the swift resolution of this situation, and to get our students and staff back to our core and vital work of delivering a great education to every student.

Respectfully,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.
Superintendent