



## SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 21, 2020

Dear Sahuarita Family:

It is almost surreal to ponder all that has changed since we left for spring break a week ago. Our State's schools are closed. And, many of the things we previously took for granted have been altered, including how we dine out, sports programming on TV, events we attend, our shopping experiences, and even the interaction with our friends, family, and coworkers.

We share the common experience of concern, anxiety, stress, and even fear. Across the globe, we are all in this public health situation together. It is my hope and prayer that in this common ground, we will work together, focus our efforts, and support one another. Often, in the most challenging of times, there lie opportunities to find new solutions, forge trusting relationships, and emerge even stronger than before.

I'd like to provide you with an update regarding our school operations.

- As you know, Governor Ducey and State Superintendent Hoffman have issued a joint proclamation that Arizona's schools will be closed at least through April 10, 2020. That includes all educational programs, extracurricular activities, and facilities.
- On March 23, 2020, we will begin a free children's meal service, open to all youth ages 1-18 years old, at Sopori School and Wrightson Ridge K-8 School. The "grab and go" breakfast and lunch will be distributed daily, Monday through Friday, from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM.
- We are beginning to launch distance education programs for all grades, beginning March 23. The objective is to advance a basic opportunity for students to continue having access to structured learning, and to keep making basic progress in their studies. I'm inspired at the creative efforts of our professional employee team members for their resourcefulness, creativity, and initiative to create these virtual learning structures. It is not an ideal learning environment, without the personal human interaction that is the essence of education, but we are truly collaborating and innovating to deliver meaningful solutions to the current reality. Thank you so much for your patience, support, and cooperation. We'll work through this together.
- The guidance from the latest Legislation, pending Governor Ducey's signature, suggests that all employee team members should work via telecommuting to the greatest extent possible. And, through our collective thinking and problem solving, it is our goal to advance our mission, and keep our employees working productively, earning their compensation, and advancing the mission of student success. People's ingenuity sometimes shines brightest when tested and challenged.

### Office of the Superintendent

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*Working as a team to help every student succeed.*



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As you can see, this situation is fluid, dynamic, and changing on a regular basis. We will continue to provide regular updates. Furthermore, we remain tirelessly committed to supporting the public health objectives, the safety and well being of our students, families, and staff, and the educational mission we are charged to provide. It is my hope that we'll all strive to be flexible, understanding, and compassionate with one another, focusing on the most important things, and trying to keep the big perspective and picture in mind.

In the challenges of the last several days, I've seen countless examples that give me hope and inspiration. I had a local business owner who said that he's had a blessed year, and would be glad to help pay for children's meals if needed. Another resident offered to transport meals to the most remote reaches of our 606 square mile District, so these children could have access to the meals. A former superintendent colleague and friend of mine, who was going to feature his children's books at the recently cancelled Tucson Festival of Books, called and is donating books for us to hand out for free to youth at the meal distribution programs. Sometimes, in the toughest of times, we see the best of people, in our common humanity, and focus on a shared purpose. We also are witnessing educational innovation and creativity in regards to a distance learning program, literally overnight. These events can make us stronger, more cohesive, and give us the foundation for an even brighter future.

You can count on regular updates, and our continued relentless resolve to deliver on our mission of working as a team to help every student succeed. And, together, even now, we will continue to make a difference! Be well.

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

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