



## SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 31, 2020

Dear Sahuarita Family:

This morning, Governor Doug Ducey and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman announced the closure of Arizona's public schools for the balance of the 2019-2020 school year. This is the latest action step in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

First, I want to reassure all of you that the current SUSD school operations plan in support of our educational mission and student well being will move forward. We will continue deploying an educational distance-learning program to support student academic progress aligned with State standards, for the balance of the year. Additionally, we will continue the current daily meals program for all children, ages 1-18. Today, through the fixed and mobile service programs, we served 1,992 meals, including 236 meals in our rural communities, through the Meals on the Move bus delivery initiative, which was just launched today. Furthermore, we will adapt and continue providing responsive and proactive service, even in this environment of less personalized interaction.

Second, I would like to provide at least some clarity to some of the different questions that are emerging. Of course, this situation is unprecedented, uncertain, and changing at a very fast pace. Truthfully, some of the questions don't yet have the concrete answers that I would like to give you. However, please know that the SUSD leadership team is working hard to thoughtfully evaluate and make sound determinations regarding the many issues and contingencies. Furthermore, we will communicate any determinations to all of you just as soon as possible.

- **Graduation-** First, we will make sure that all students who have completed graduation requirements receive the diploma that they've earned. At this time, it does not seem practicable to have traditional Commencement Exercises while schools are on State closure due to a public health emergency. However, I am working with members of our District leadership team and high school principals to develop the best alternative plan possible. We are striving to create a plan that honors the achievements of our graduating seniors, possibly including a recognition ceremony in celebration of this educational milestone. For example, we may be able to have a ceremony after the school year ends and the closure is over. There are certainly other creative ideas we can pursue. Multiple parents have already reached out and offered to help. Of course, this COVID-19 situation is not predictable, which makes concrete answers hard to give at this moment. However, we will not let our senior class' graduation from high school go by without a well deserved and dignified recognition, and we will be providing updates and details as soon as they become available.
- **Report Cards-** Procedures are being implemented to deliver student report cards from the third grading period. They will be delivered via U.S. Mail.

### Office of the Superintendent

 520.625.3502

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



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- **Medicines-** We are working to set up a simple procedure within the next couple of weeks, to arrange for parents to come to a central location and pick up any student prescription medicines currently stored at school offices. More details will be forthcoming from our District Health Services Supervisor, Ms. Jeanine Sarnacki, RN.
- **Field Trips and Program Fees-** With the cancellation of upcoming out of State field trips and programs, there have been questions about fees paid and possible refunds. Our Chief Financial Officer, Lizette Huie, is working to develop clarity about allowable considerations in this regard. Please know that we are committed to refunding such fees for pending events that have not taken place, to the extent that it is allowable and possible. There will be specific details coming about corresponding procedures and routines for whatever determinations are made.
- Given many considerations, the regularly scheduled meeting of the Sahuarita USD Governing Board on April 8 is going to be cancelled.

In summary, we will pursue unwavering commitment to some basic goals. First, we will act to support the health, wellness, and safety of our students and community. Second, we will continue to deliver our educational mission to the highest levels possible. Third, we will communicate with regularity and clarity. Finally, we will work with resolve, to find the best solutions possible to the different challenges before us. As the saying goes, we must take the proverbial lemons before us, and make the best lemonade possible. And together, we will do just that.

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

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