



SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

April 17, 2020

Dear Sahuarita Family:

As we enter the second month of this unprecedented school closure, I'd like to keep providing as much clarity and communication as possible.

The Distance Learning Program continues to operate and provide students with the opportunity to continue making progress in their academic studies. It is my hope that the grading adjustments, announced last week, will support academic learning and reasonable expectations, given today's many contingencies, and our mission of student success.

I've gotten an inquiry or two about plans to allow students the opportunity to pick up materials that are still at the school buildings. This also includes turn in of items like school athletic uniforms, and a chance to pick up yearbooks. As soon as the parameters for public gathering become more accommodating than they are today, there will be a scheduled day for these procedures to take place. It is tentatively anticipated and hoped that this can take place in May prior to the regular close of the school year but, of course, this is dependent upon the broader context of this public health situation.

We are striving to honor, to the greatest extent legally and operationally possible, refund requests for pending events, trips, and programs that had not taken place prior to the school closure. The requests can be made at <https://bit.ly/SUSD30refund>.

I've received a few questions specifically about lunch refunds. In a nutshell, we treat those funds as we do each year when school ends. Any funds left in a student's account will transfer to the next year. Upon request, if a student is graduating, families may transfer funds to a sibling's account. Similarly, funds may be donated to offset District charges. Finally, requests for a refund may be made. All meal program related requests may be addressed to Suzy Harris, Director of Food Service, at sharris@sahuarita.net.

I'd like to highlight some examples of how Sahuarita Shines, even in these stressful, anxious, and uncertain days.

- The local Mod Pizza Restaurant donated 22 pizzas to our wonderful men and women in Transportation Services. These professional school bus drivers and other staff are delivering the essential service of healthy meals and learning packets for our students, especially in the more rural places of our community.
- Enoby Arriaga (SHS '18) is serving with the AZ Army National Guard and activated in support of the pandemic crisis support efforts here in our State.

Office of the Superintendent

 520.625.3502

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Meanwhile, Enoby is currently completing twenty-two (22) college credits at Arizona State University.

- Stephanie Cook, School Guidance Counselor at Sopori Elementary School, is personally reaching out to individual students in support their adjustment and well being to all of the change and a different learning platform.
- Mr. Bruce Wright, Physical Education Teacher at Sahuarita Primary School, is creating and posting daily YouTube videos to promote exercise, physical activity, and good health in these days of staying at home.
- At Anza Trail K-8 School, some teachers personally dropped off work at students' homes and are working one on one with individual students via Zoom.
- The 21st Century Program at Sahuarita Middle School has been operating high interest, enrichment programs like virtual crazy cooking and virtual dance.
- Our Distance Learning Tech Support Team has been working tirelessly, beyond their own teaching duties and personal responsibilities, to coach and assist colleagues in the deployment of the new distance learning model. Thanks to Lindsey Mellen, Luis Sainz, Ryan Carle-Ogren, Tanaya Matthews, Sara Mora, Ben Lebovitz, and Rusty Carle-Ogren.
- The 5th Grade teaching team at Wrightson Ridge K-8 School, Adam Johnson, Christine Law, Holly Johnson, and Scott Joling, created a dynamic, musical, colorful and positive virtual Awards Assembly, to honor students for outstanding achievements during the third grading period.
- In support of our graduating seniors, both Sahuarita HS and Walden Grove HS are lighting their respective stadium lights for 20 minutes, each week on the day of their previously scheduled graduations, Wednesday for SHS and Thursday for WGHS. The time is at 8:20 PM, which is 2020 using the 24 hour military time clock.

I miss all of you, especially in pondering the many activities, concerts, awards ceremonies, honor inductions, and end of year celebrations, which would normally be taking place these days. However, please know that even though we are all apart, we are on the same team and joined in the shared effort to keep our students, families, staff and community safe, keep educating our students, and keep working through this situation together. We are here for you and ready to respond and support you in any way that we can.

The former First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, said, "You gain strength, courage, and confidence when you look uncertainty and fear in the face and persevere." Let us grow stronger and more cohesive as a community as we persevere through this together.

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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