



SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

May 8, 2020

Dear Sahuarita Family:

As we prepare to celebrate Mother's Day this weekend, I can't help but recall the memory of my own mother. She epitomized the ideal of what it means to be a mother. Mom was selfless, family-centered, tirelessly dedicated to her children, and wise. She often shared proverb like sayings, called "dichos" in Spanish. One of them was "la necesidad hace el maestro." The basic meaning is that necessity is a tool for innovation, creativity, and positive outcomes. I believe that this saying certainly applies to our current day.

I'd like to provide an update about some of the latest outcomes:

First, all schools are now communicating with families about procedures and routines for school year closure. Please know that all material pickups, equipment turn in, and similar events will be taking place with overt attention to public health guidance and norms. This includes social distancing, managing numbers of people present in a given space, timing and pacing, avoiding congregation, and recommendation that people wear a face covering.

Second, I'd like to update you about some current plans in regards to next year's opening in the Fall. Please understand that, given the uncertain and dynamic nature of these variables, this action plan will continue to evolve and change. At the present time, we are planning to increase the frequency and scope of regular cleaning protocol. This includes a greater frequency of sanitizing high touch surfaces like student desks, a significant increase in hand sanitizer dispensers around campuses and offices, and more in-depth and frequent cleaning of school buses, cafeterias, and playgrounds. Similarly, we plan to install Plexiglass shields in high traffic main office areas and reinforce hand washing norms, frequency, and technique. We also plan to mark off spaces as reminders for waiting in offices, and provide guidance for movement around campus. These are steps that make good sense, and we believe will have redeeming positive value in helping to keep our students and staff healthy in regards to COVID 19, and also a variety of other illnesses that tend to spread in areas where people congregate. I'm hopeful that it will help to support good school attendance, and correlate with student academic success! We will continue to adapt and add to this action list as further guidance emerges and determinations are made. Please know and be assured that all decisions and actions will be made in consultation with the best public health guidance, norms, and practices.

Office of the Superintendent

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Third, we are working hard to further formalize and develop our distance learning platform. The vision is that we must be prepared to be flexible, responsive, and adaptable to a variety of situations. These technology-driven systems will allow us to effectively serve children if they are ill, and respond quickly if further public health situations require a class or school to close, even for a few days or a couple of weeks, due to a quarantine situation. Furthermore, this type of systematic program expansion will expand our educational toolbox and help us to advance our mission of working as a team to help every student succeed. I am pleased to share that we've received a Federal eRate matching grant to expand our technology infrastructure, which will further enhance the online access capability at all schools.

Fourth, I would like to share some exciting news and meaningful information. First, if you've not already done so, please take a moment to register your new and returning students for the 2020-21 school year. This is so important, to keep the most up to date records, to place students in-class assignments, and to generally plan and prepare to serve you in the best way possible going forward. Congratulations to Sahuarita High School senior, Sarah Cornaby, who recently received the National Merit Scholarship, a very special and highly competitive honor sponsored by Raytheon Corporation. Sarah plans to study computer science at Brigham Young University. Speaking of our amazing high school Class of 2020, the members of our SHS and WGHS graduating class have earned a combined total of approximately \$9,000,000 in scholarships, grants, and investments in their postsecondary education and professional training. Those honors are still coming in, and the number is likely to go up! No doubt, the success of our students is closely correlated to the professional excellence, tireless dedication, and student-centered focus of our faculty and staff. On this week designated as Teacher Appreciation Week, I know you join me in sincere gratitude to our professional educators for their outstanding service to our mission of student success. Finally, I am pleased to share that the Sahuarita Unified School District has pursued, and received approval, to continue our current meals program into the Summer of 2020. The program will continue providing daily, nutritious breakfast and lunch to all children ages 1-18, under the same current procedures of pick up sites at Sopori School and Wrightson Ridge K-8 School. Furthermore, we will be able to offer weekend meal packs, as well! It is our honor and privilege to deliver these additional services to our families, especially during these challenging times. More details about this summer program will be forthcoming from our SFE Foodservice partners.

So, as we can see, the necessity of the current situation has pushed us to come together, and create promising and positive outcomes. These include action steps that promise to further

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support the health and safety of our children and staff, the scope of our 21st Century educational programs, and the meal services which deliver to children in our greater community. Another one of my mother's favorite "dichos" is "no hay mal que por bien no venga." Roughly translated, this means that there is a silver lining in every dark cloud. On this day, I'd like to extend heartfelt best wishes for a Happy Mother's Day to all of our mothers, grandmothers, and all those who serve in this most noble and special of roles. Be well.

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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