



SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

February 24, 2021

Dear Sahuarita Family:

The French novelist and journalist, Alphonse Karr once wrote, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” Things continue to be both uncertain and changing rapidly. However, there is a feeling of renewed optimism, as spring is on the near horizon.

The disease numbers are thankfully on the decline, although most of them, including infection rates, are still hovering in the range of substantial spread. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) put out new papers, both encouraging return to in-person instruction but also stressing the importance of strong mitigation measures, including distancing.

Throughout this journey, we’ve tried to keep our decision-making compass focused upon a few points. We move slowly and steadily, based upon multiple measures and consideration of the entire context, not just any instantaneous number at a given point in time. We look at multiple data measures and trends over time. We talk to the public health experts for their professional opinions. We evaluate our own mitigation and disease management situation continuously. We also try to make methodical, balanced decisions and avoid quick abrupt changes, unless an emergency or unforeseen situation emerges.

We are encouraged about the favorable data trends and a steady increase in the number of our employee team members who are getting vaccinated. We wish to act with intentionality and resolve to get to full in-person learning this spring, to the extent that it is possible. However, we want it to be sustainable and do everything possible to not have to move back to full remote learning unless necessary.

Given the multitude of considerations, I’d like to briefly outline the conceptual plan for our next phase. **Assuming that the overall trends continue to move favorably, it is hoped to begin the move back to full, five day in-person learning on March 22, 2021, the day that we return from spring break. As we’ve done multiple times, the plan is to begin with the elementary grades first, specifically grades K-5. It is then anticipated to phase back the middle and high school levels, in a similar manner as has been done in previous shifts, although the time frames are still pending.** According to the CDC, the level of community spread is a vital consideration with these decisions, in addition to school mitigation efforts. Therefore, we must all do our part, with continued self-discipline and attention to mask use, distancing “to the greatest extent possible (CDC),” avoiding large group congregations, and attention to cleaning and sanitation norms.

In the days leading to spring break, we will continue to engage staff, parents, community, and our Board in discussing these next steps. **We will provide more concrete communication prior to the spring break,** but I wanted to share these general thoughts at this time.

Through continued cooperation, and all of us doing our part, I remain confident and hopeful that this spring will continue to get brighter and brighter over time. I look forward to walking these next steps of promise with all of you.

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Office of the Superintendent

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Working as a team to help every student succeed.