



SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

September 30, 2020

Dear Sahuarita Family:

As I write this letter, we are completing two full weeks of in-person hybrid instruction for students in grades K-5. I am pleased to report that, despite challenges, we are making steady progress and moving closer to normalcy. It takes a total team effort and a shared sacrifice. It is different than before the pandemic but students are in our schools and learning is taking place. Additionally, as of today, we have not had any documented cases of COVID-19 transmission within any of our schools or facilities.

The cleaning and sanitation protocol is being implemented with full fidelity and attention to detail. Our professional educators are delivering instruction with sound instructional practice, quality, and student-centered focus. And our staff is managing students both in person and in the virtual space on a given day. I am so grateful for our team's extraordinary effort and dedication. The foodservice program is operating and providing nutritious meals each day while maintaining distance, safe practices, and sanitary environments. Our dedicated bus drivers are delivering students safely, back and forth, from home to the schoolhouse gate, again with added precautions and attention to safety detail. I've waved and talked to parents in the morning drop off and know that you are taking extra attention to check your children in the morning and making sure that they are practicing safety procedures and are healthy and ready to go. It takes all of us working together as a team.

We are moving steadily through the process of getting back to in-person learning. The next logical step is resuming in-person operations for the secondary level students, those in middle and high school, grades 6th-12th. Multiple data indicators are continuing to move in a favorable direction. The dashboard in Pima County did change to red, specifically for the disease rate metric. In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer for Pima County, Dr. Francisco Garcia, MD, I heard some meaningful insights. First, the recent uptick in the numbers is significantly concentrated within a clearly defined geographic area of Pima County, most notably around the vicinity of the University of Arizona. Second, the University and Pima County Health Department have been assertively acting to quickly address those issues, and the preliminary indication is that the numbers are flattening and generally stabilizing once again. Furthermore, the case numbers in the Sahuarita/Green Valley area continue to be relatively low. In summary, Dr. Garcia stated, "We continue to support your plans to cautiously move into the hybrid instruction phase of your back to school plans. "

Therefore, barring any unforeseen changes, we will begin hybrid in-person learning for the middle and high school grades on Thursday, October 15, 2020. Once again, we will begin with the "B" cohort group on October 15, 2020. The "A" cohort group will report for in-person

Office of the Superintendent

 520.625.3502

 350 W. Sahuarita Rd, Sahuarita, AZ 85629

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learning on October 19, 2020. Please note that October 15 and 16, 2020 are half days for K-8 students due to Parent/Teacher Conferences. However, they are full days for our high schools. As in the elementary grades, students will attend in person based upon an alphabetic grouping by last name, with half of the students attending on Thursday and Friday, and the other group coming in person on Monday and Tuesday. The Wednesday will similarly be full remote learning for all, and provide additional opportunity for supplemental cleaning, individualized student services, and professional development. There is specific detail about each school's return to school operations and plans on the [Road Back website](#), and each secondary school will likewise provide additional school-specific communications in regards to the return to school. Of course, the normal status of this entire situation is that it can be uncertain and change over time. Therefore, we are always prepared to pivot and adapt if something changes. And, of course, we will promptly let all of our families know if unforeseen developments emerge.

I am sincerely humbled and so grateful for the Sahuarita spirit of community, perseverance, and commitment to our students. This shared effort will continue to serve us in our mission of working together, each of us doing our part, and moving slowly and steadily back to normalcy, one step at a time. I look forward to seeing more of our students around campus very soon!

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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