



SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

March 8, 2021

Dear Sahuarita Family:

On March 13, 2020, just before last year's spring break, all of our students walked through the schoolhouse gate before the pandemic-related disruptions. **One year later, on March 22, 2021, right after the spring break, we will again welcome all K-5 elementary students back to school for five day, in-person learning.**

This is a significant milestone and step for our community after a very challenging year; one that has taken a toll on all of us, but also hopefully made us stronger. This decision is based upon favorable disease-related numbers and community spread, continued counsel from health authorities, and our own community mitigation efforts.

Our focus is upon working together with the entire community, and minimizing community spread, so that this is the beginning of a long-term recovery. We must minimize the likelihood of another surge, so that our schools can remain fully open. That will require a total team effort. First, this initial phase will include strict fidelity to all previous mitigation steps, including mask usage, intense cleaning and sanitation protocol, use of PPE, tracking and tracing, and distancing and procedural norms, to the greatest extent possible. Furthermore, student instruction will initially focus upon keeping our youngsters in self-contained groups, as much as practicable. This will help minimize the likelihood of virus transmission to larger numbers and expanded quarantine possibilities.

Our senior leadership team has evaluated the provisions of Governor Ducey's recent Executive Order, Number EO 2021-4. The Order was a validation of our current plans, and our action steps are in full alignment with the requirements of his Order. **The high school and middle school grades will remain in the hybrid mode for the time being.** This is to monitor the full return for the elementary group, and make any necessary adjustments, prior to bringing back the secondary schools, and their more complex operating norms. As you recall, the middle and high schools had significantly more case numbers and quarantines in the late fall and winter. If operations and associated variables are running smoothly, it is hoped to move our secondary schools to full in-person learning by the early part of April. This is in line with our slow, steady, and phased strategic approach with these dynamic determinations. We need to keep moving, but we must keep moving with caution so that we can successfully sustain this progress for the long haul.

For those students who are currently learning in our Sahuarita Digital Pathways Academy (SDPA) program, please know that nothing will change for you. The Governor's recent Order still validates the opportunity for schools to offer full remote learning options such as SDPA.

Office of the Superintendent

 520.625.3502

 350 W. Sahuarita Rd, Sahuarita, AZ 85629

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We are working with principal leadership and school faculty and staff to prepare for the return of all of our elementary students on March 22, 2021. There are multiple adjustments, questions, and we are tirelessly committed to making this transition a safe, positive, and successful process. With this letter, there is a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. Hopefully, it will answer some of the most common questions you may have about this next leg of the Road Back. Additionally, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher and principal with any additional questions.

It has been a difficult year in many ways. I express my sincere gratitude for your patience and trust as we have navigated these storms. We have moved through it as a team, and we will continue to do so. Let us all keep doing our part in our daily actions and activities, with intentionality, to keep the spread of the virus moving in the downward direction, and advancing the promise of new and brighter days. I look forward to seeing all of you around campus real soon!

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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