



SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

May 21, 2021

Dear Sahuarita Family:

The curtain has mostly closed on the 2020-21 academic year, and what a year it has been for all of us. Despite the challenging, stressful, and uncertain times we have experienced, the year has produced multiple successes. I was so proud this week watching 431 young men and women walk across the stage and receive their high school diplomas. The loss and sacrifice of the last 14 months made this year's Commencement Exercises a little extra special. This year's graduating class earned almost \$9,000,000 in scholarships for college, university, and other post-secondary education.

In my opinion, the most critical asset which allowed us to successfully move through this extraordinary year has been the spirit of community that binds us together in a common commitment to our students, staff, and families. We may not have always agreed about every decision or situation, but we stuck together, supported each other, and found solutions to the challenges we encountered along the way. For that, I wish to extend my most sincere and heartfelt gratitude.

As we look to the promise of a bright and prosperous 2021-22 school year, we are continuing to look at the changing landscape of this situation and striving to communicate with thoughtfulness, consistency, and timeliness. Things continue to move and change rather quickly. Recently, the CDC shared encouraging guidance about the efficacy of the vaccines and endorsement for fully vaccinated people to be able to retreat from mask requirements in most situations. Vaccines are also now authorized for people above the age of 12 years. The case numbers in Pima County continue to hover in a relatively lower moderate range. Our own case management process over the last month saw a significant favorable shift in case numbers, compared to previous months. Hopefully, continued increases in vaccination rates will correlate with lower numbers of reported cases.

We have always strived to move slowly and steadily, guided by official dashboard trends over time, public health guidance, and evaluation of our own operations. Similarly, it is reasonable and important to provide families the most timely information possible, in preparation for the 2021-22 school year. **We will plan to take the next steps in this regard, beginning with the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Governing Board on June 9, 2021. Based upon the current and updated information, I anticipate making a recommendation to the Governing Board at that time for the use of masks be optional for the 2021-22 school year.** This is one aspect in the development of the comprehensive strategic mitigation plan for next school year, to continue to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for our students and staff.

Best wishes for a restful summer season with your families. Again, I thank you for your patience, trust, and support as we've navigated the rough waters of this last year. There is great hope in the promise of the new school year. And together, we will continue to make a difference.

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Office of the Superintendent

520.625.3502

350 W. Sahuarita Rd, Sahuarita, AZ 85629

www.susd30.us

Working as a team to help every student succeed.