



**SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

February 23, 2022

Dear Sahuarita Families:

In the last week, we have had numerous examples of success, in support of our mission, “Working as a team to help every student succeed.” I believe this success is even more special given the path we have had— striving to achieve excellence in still rather uncertain times.

Over the weekend, Sahuarita USD hosted the Arizona Music Educators Association (AMEA) Southern Regional Honor Band, composed of extraordinarily talented student musicians from the broad area of our State. Of these accomplished musicians, twenty-seven (27) hailed from Walden Grove HS and Sahuarita HS. The Sahuarita NJROTC program will be traveling to San Jose, CA for the National Orienteering event next month. Last week, the Walden Grove HS Girls Soccer Team advanced to the State semifinals and battled Salpointe Catholic HS to a 2-2 tie, in overtime, before falling in the penalty kicks tie-breaking phase of the game. Again, in the fine arts, the PAC Dance Team from Walden Grove HS earned their seventh consecutive State Dance title, followed in second place by the Jockeys Dance Team from Sahuarita HS. Finally, the Sahuarita HS wrestling team achieved the AZ DIV III State Championship over the weekend, with Walden Grove HS as the runner-up! Indeed, Sahuarita Shines across AZ!

The spring is a time of renewal and hope, as the weather begins to warm, plants bloom, and the busy season in school, home, and community moves full speed ahead. Similarly, we continue to see multiple encouraging signs of hope in school operations, as COVID-19 cases trend downward, and we continue to move forward in anticipation of a rather normal springtime. Let us continue working together, implementing basic mitigation practices that support our common desire for good health, normal school and community life, and continued forward momentum!

I am pleased to share that, on February 21, 2022, the Arizona Senate, by a 23-6-1 vote, authorized our State's public schools to use previously allocated financial resources to their budgeted capacity for the 2021-22 fiscal year. The House had already approved this Resolution. This addressed the previous risk of a large current year budget reduction, based upon a 1980s era Amendment regarding the aggregate expenditure limit.

This week brings the Rodeo Days tradition that has been an integral part of our Southern Arizona Western heritage for many decades. There is no school on February 24-25, 2022. As a child, I remember going Downtown to sit on the curb of the storefronts in Tucson, to watch the horses, wagons, and marching bands move through Congress Street in the annual parade. I hope that the coming days will afford your family a chance to enjoy some of the Western festivities and spend a nice time together.

As we look to the future, the quest never ends for continuous development and improvement in

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our programs and services. I'm pleased to share that we resourcefully sought out and were approved for \$18,000,000 in AZ School Facilities Board (SFB) funding for additional high school classroom space. Our Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, Mr. Scott Downs, will be leading this important process. Part of this process will include outreach to school leadership, faculty, and staff to develop plans, and evaluate supplemental needs. The SFB historically has a very basic standard of construction. In the past, we have supplemented these allocations to enhance our facilities. Again, we may have an opportunity to enhance these projects to achieve our local facility standards. For example, we have historically made classroom spaces larger than the SFB minimum standards. Additionally, to support long term planning, we will be reaching out in preliminary discussions about building renewal needs at all schools and facilities. This may include needs like painting or weatherizing, cafeteria renovations, expanding preschool facilities, improving fine arts facilities, or revitalizing and updating athletic facilities. These are just examples. We will be reaching out regarding these topics and other current topics of interest through the Community Conversations this spring.

In summary, this is an exciting time! Our schools and community are poised for an exciting chapter of development, growth, and success. As always, we will strive to find common ground, shared direction, and a spirit of collaboration that yields mutually beneficial fruits to all sectors of our community, in the way of education, economic development, workforce development, and overall quality of life. Together, we will continue to make a difference!

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

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