



SAHUARITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

May 25, 2022

Dear Sahuarita Families:

The purpose of this communication is to address a topic that is so incomprehensible, tragic, and sad that it seems beyond reality. Yet, once again, a community in America, specifically in Uvalde, TX, is facing something unthinkable, the loss of innocent life at the hands of a gunman.

Our hearts are heavy with grief at the thought of lives lost so senselessly. We extend our prayers, thoughts, and solidarity to this community. Furthermore, we continue to move with focus and resolve, to make sure that we are taking intentional actions, in our local community, and doing everything we can do to advance a safe environment in our schools, minimize risk, and be as prepared as possible for every contingency. This is a multifaceted, ongoing process that involves education, facilities management, and multisector coordination and communication. It is not easy, but it must and will continue to be a top priority.

First, I want to share some of the multiple elements of our school safety plan and general practices that have been and continue to be implemented. They include:

- Emergency procedures and routines for lockdown type situations
- Regularly scheduled emergency drills and evaluation
- Two full-time Sahuarita Police (SPD) officers assigned to SUSD #30 as School Resource Officers (SRO)
- Perimeter fencing around all school campuses
- Designated entry and school access points
- Full-time professional counselors at every school
- Collaboration with SPD to support their tactical training on our school sites.

Second, just today, I spoke by phone with our Chief of Police, John Noland. Chief Noland shares my sense of grief and sadness, and also shares my resolve to continue doing whatever we can to make Sahuarita schools the safest place they can possibly be. For example, we will be working with him, his command staff, and officers this summer to walk school facilities and further evaluate, update, and train the basic elements of the emergency prevention and response plan. Furthermore, early in the new school year, we

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plan to host a Community Conversation centered around the topic of school safety. These are opportunities to share and gather suggestions and ideas from our families, and integrate them as part of the overall action planning process.

It truly breaks my heart that, in the last month, our Country has experienced such horror in a church, grocery store, and now an elementary school. The contributing issues to these events are both many and complex. However, I truly believe that meaningful progress can be made by working together, finding common ground, seeking solutions, and taking action to put them into practice. Each of us has a role to play in making our community the safest and best it can be for all of us, and especially for the children that we serve. Together, we will continue to make a difference.

Sincerely,

Manuel O. Valenzuela, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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