December 10, 2020

Dear Sunnyside Families —

I would like to continue to extend my gratitude for your ongoing dedication to your child’s education and for your patience with the current health crisis that has challenged our school systems. I also would like to take this opportunity to recognize our students for persevering despite the uncertainties this year has presented to them.

As we end the semester, I would like to share some important information and key dates with you. Pima County continues to see an exponential increase in COVID-19 positivity rates. With the holiday season among us, we want to ensure that we are taking the necessary measures to prioritize the health and safety of our staff and students. For this reason, our Governing Board has made the decision to delay in-person hybrid learning until January 19, 2021 following Dr. Martin Luther King Day. However, school will still begin remotely on January 4th as currently scheduled. If you have chosen hybrid learning for the second semester, your child’s teacher/s will begin their classes remotely on January 4th as well.

Although the Pima County Health Department (PCHD) is not recommending that schools go fully remote at this time, we are once again taking a proactive approach to help mitigate the spread after the holidays. Delaying the start of in-person hybrid instruction for two weeks will allow time to pass after families have gathered and/or traveled for the holidays. The PCHD is continuing to support in-person hybrid instruction at this time because the transmission rate occurring within schools has been extremely low across the county. Further delay of in-person hybrid instruction will only happen if the PCHD makes that recommendation prior to January 19th.

Please be aware that several organizations in our community have organized testing events that are scheduled to take place throughout the month of December. You can find a list of upcoming testing sites/events on our website’s homepage at susd12.org. I encourage you and your family to take advantage of these resources. The information on our website will continue to be updated as we learn about more testing events.

Each year, the Oxford Dictionary announces its word of the year. To close 2020, the Oxford Dictionary instead released a list: *Words of an Unprecedented Year*. Words on this list like pandemic, twindemic, social distancing and systemic racism have now become part of our every-day language. In 2020 we not only added words to our vocabulary, but we also learned new ways to do school, celebrations, and life itself.

As I reflect on 2020 for us here in SUSD, there is one word that brings meaning to what I know to be true about the Sunnyside community, and that is **SIGNIFICANT**. Every student, every parent, and every staff member in the district have been amazing and resilient throughout this extremely challenging year. We have become stronger together and will use this collective strength to make 2021 a successful year.

Wishing you and your family a safe and wonderful holiday season!

Steve Holmes, Superintendent