March 11, 2021

Dear Sunnyside Families —

I would like to share some important information regarding Governor Ducey’s most recent Executive Order and to also provide further clarification about what this means for our district.

On March 3, 2021, Governor Ducey issued Executive Order 2021-04, which states that all districts shall return to in-person, teacher-lead instruction no later than the Monday following a scheduled spring break, or on March 15.

Following the executive order, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) released additional guidance to provide school districts with further clarification. The guidance provided by ADE states that regardless of the community wide spread of COVID-19, elementary schools must open for full time instruction, five days a week.

Upon clarification with our legal counsel regarding the executive order and ADE guidance, it was determined that we needed to comply with the order, but could start the 5 days a week requirement after our scheduled Spring Break. What this means for SUSD is that beginning April 6, 2021, all elementary schools in our district will be required to open five days a week. All students who are currently in hybrid will be allowed to return to school for full in-person, teacher-led instruction, five days per week, if families choose to do so. Students who are in remote learning may continue to learn remotely.

The data tracker provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that Pima County is currently in the “substantial transmission” category of risk. For this reason, SUSD middle and high schools will remain in the same instructional model. In other words, students who are in hybrid will continue to attend school for in-person hybrid only during their assigned A or B track. Students who are remote will remain in remote learning. This is in compliance with the executive order which states that communities in substantial transmission can remain in reduced attendance/hybrid learning mode for middle and high school students. We will continue to monitor the data tracker and follow the CDC school opening guidance for any recommended changes to the current model for middle and high school students.

Although all of the mitigation efforts will continue to be enforced, the six foot distancing requirement will be difficult if not impossible to implement at the elementary school level given the 5 full day in person expectation and the size of our classrooms. However, we still expect that schools attempt to keep a six foot distance to the greatest extent possible. Remember that you can learn more about our mitigation efforts by visiting our website’s “Reopening Page”, or by clicking HERE.
If you wish to make any changes to the current instructional model for your child, please contact your school Principal for accommodations.

I would like to thank you for your continued patience and understanding as we attempt to comply with federal and state requirements regarding opening schools.

Steve Holmes, Superintendent