



ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER
9801 West Van Buren Street
Tolleson, Arizona 85353
(623) 478-4000
(623) 936-5048 Fax

GOVERNING BOARD OF EDUCATION
Freddie Villalon, President
Devin Del Palacio, Vice President
Steven Chapman, Member
Dr. Kino Flores, Member

SUPERINTENDENT
Nora Gutierrez

November 2, 2020

Dear TUHSD Community,

I am sending you this letter because I want to make sure that the community receives the same information about a recent tragedy impacting our TUHSD family. We received heartbreaking news this weekend that a beloved Teacher and Coach in our district passed away. It is important that we all remain steadfast and united in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. After months of diligently following health and safety guidelines, this is **not** the time to let our guards down. Make no mistake, COVID-19 is deadly and in our community.

We take the responsibility of keeping our students and staff safe seriously. From the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, all decisions for student learning options, athletics, and co-curricular programs have been based on following the guidelines and meeting the metrics to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff, and the community.

TUHSD was the first high school district in Arizona to move to remote online learning in Spring 2020. For the health and safety of our students and staff, we have remained with online learning for the first semester. In spite of our best efforts, COVID-19 has impacted our district and taken lives. I am concerned that the numbers are expected to continue to increase as we enter the cold and flu season, as well as the holidays. We have some of the best health and safety guidelines and protocols in the state on our sites, but we cannot control what our staff and students do when they leave our campuses.

TUHSD has diligently followed guidelines from the CDC, Arizona Department of Health Services, Arizona Department of Education, Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH), and the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA). Even with all of the precautions we put in place, we were not able to avoid COVID-19 on our sites. We have had many reported cases from students, staff, and their family members over the past seven months. Recently, MCDPH declared an outbreak at one of our campuses after three football coaches and three players contracted COVID-19. We have also had to quarantine or suspend three other athletic programs in the district due to positive tests and the risk of exposure. Following our District protocols, in all cases any individual that may have been exposed or in close contact to any person testing positive, received communication for their site administration.

We attempted to provide Fall Sports for our students, but had to delay the season due to the inability to meet the metrics for permissive practice as recommended in the AIA guidelines. TUHSD requested and received approval from the AIA for an alternative, extended season. Unfortunately, the continued failure to meet the three benchmarks for competition stated in the AIA guidelines, led to the cancellation of football and volleyball competitions on Friday, October 30th and the cancellation of all fall activities effective Tuesday, November 3rd.

	Cases per 100/K People	% Positive Tests	COVID-Like Illness
Thursday, October 30	110.81	10.74%	3.00%
Thursday, October 23	76.03	7.45%	3.00%
Thursday, October 16	58.14	6.39%	3.00%

It is with great concern that we share the information posted below which shows the positive cases in our district. The chart below shows the positive cases for students and staff as of Monday, November 2, 2020 by site.

	STAFF CASES	STUDENT CASES	TOTAL
CEA/Lighthouse Academy	1	0	1
Copper Canyon	7	3	10
La Joya Community	4	9	13
Sierra Linda	3	1	4
Tolleson Union	13	3	16
Tolleson Virtual	0	1	1
University High	0	1	1
West Point	7	10	17
Westview	4	17	21
District Office	26	-	26
TOTALS	65	45	110

In the meantime, we continue to provide on-site support services for those students that require it. We continue to provide meal packs both at schools and through home delivery. We also have laptops and hot spots for all students that need them. We are doing our best to support our students and families during this unique time.

Tolleson Union High School District will continue to focus on keeping everyone as safe and healthy as possible. COVID-19 is in our community and does not discriminate. It is important that we all continue to follow the health and safety protocols to keep ourselves and our families, friends, teachers and TUHSD staff safe. We have been diligently following the health and safety protocols since March; let's not stop now. I want you all to know that we are #TollesonStrong and that together we will get through this.

Sincerely,



Nora Gutierrez
Superintendent