



March 9, 2021

Dear PUSD Families, Staff & Students:

As many of you may have heard last week, Governor Ducey issued Executive Order 2021-04. The purpose of this letter is to share that information with you and to let you know what this means for you and your families.

This Order states in part as follows:

1. The Arizona Department of Health Services shall immediately update their public health and schools dashboard to reflect the metrics utilized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and align their community transition phases with others identified in the CDC guidance *Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation* issued February 12, 2021. The public health and schools dashboard shall include the following categories:
 - a. Low Transmission
 - b. Moderate Transmission
 - c. Substantial Transmission
 - d. High Transmission
2. All district and charter schools shall return to in-person, teacher-lead instruction no later than the Monday following a scheduled spring break, or March 15, if there is no scheduled spring break as follows:
 - a. For counties with Low Transmission or Moderate Transmission:
 - i. All schools shall open with in-person instruction and virtual instruction options. Physical distancing should be maximized to the greatest extent possible.
 - b. For counties with Substantial Transmission:
 - i. All Schools shall be open with in-person instruction and virtual instruction options. Physical distancing should be maximized to the greatest extent possible.
 - ii. Middle and High Schools may reduce attendance to reduce transmission and increase physical distancing.
 - c. For counties with High Transmission:
 - i. Elementary Schools shall be open with in-person instruction and virtual instruction options. Physical distancing should be

- maximized to the greatest extent possible for in-person instruction.
 - ii. Middle and High Schools that are already open for in-person instruction shall remain open and strictly implement mitigation strategies. If a school has not already resumed in-person instruction, the school may operate virtually. A school may open during this phase if they implement strict mitigation strategies.
3. Schools shall notify parents within a reasonable time period that in-person learning will resume, and continue to offer virtual instruction for students upon request from a parent or guardian.
 4. An individual district or charter school may only close if the local health department advises closing an entire charter or district school due to a significant outbreak of the COVID-19 virus that poses a risk to the students or staff and is approved for closure by the Arizona Department of Health Services. School districts must continue to offer onsite support services for students for the duration of the approved closure.
 5. All charter and district schools shall notify the Arizona Department of Education no later than March 15, 2021, that they are in compliance with this order. The Arizona Department of Education shall provide a copy of the list of schools in compliance with the order to the Arizona State Board of Education. Any school whose status changes in accordance with Section 2 of this Order, shall notify the Arizona Department of Education within 24 hours of the status change.

While PUSD is still considered in the "substantial" category we are seeing declining cases in our area and believe it is just a matter of time before we move into the moderate category and, eventually, the low transmission category. Having said that, PUSD will continue with the strict mitigation strategies in place for in-person learning. These strategies include social distancing, masking, and handwashing to name a few. In addition, the district has installed water stations in lieu of drinking fountains in each of the schools. As a result, your child will be able to refill their water bottles in a safe manner.

What parents need to know about how this Order may affect your child's educational experience in PUSD

1. PUSD resumed the hybrid learning model on February 16, 2021, and all students who wish to attend school in-person have been permitted to do so, and those wishing to remain in remote learning have been permitted to do so as well. On Site Support Services (OSS) at the school sites have remained open during this time.

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2. Effective Monday, March 22, 2021, OSS will no longer be an option in the district. As a result, your child will either need to be attending school in-person (in their assigned class) or remotely.
3. As noted above, PUSD has continued to allow all students who wish to remain in remote learning to do so and the district will continue to allow this through the remainder of the school year, barring any additional Orders from the Governor to the contrary.
4. Meals will continue to be distributed in the same manner as currently being distributed for the remainder of the school year.
5. Families will, however, need to be thinking about the 2021-2022 SY, as it is anticipated that remote learning will not be an option for the upcoming school year. If families still wish for their child(ren) to attend school in a remote or virtual manner, Sage and Sand Virtual Academy will be an option for those families with children in grades 6-12.

To review the Governor's Order in its entirety, please go to the following link:
<https://azgovernor.gov/executive-orders>.

If you have additional questions about how this Order will affect your family, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's school.

Larry E. Wallen



Superintendent

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