Welcome to District 1: The Podcast. Your host is Leslie Lenhart, and she is joined by Superintendent Gabriel Trujillo.

Leslie Lenhart: Thank you. That was Nicholas Martinez, 4th grader at CE Rose K-8 School. Hi, Dr. Trujillo, how are you today?

Gabriel Trujillo: Spring is here! It’s a beautiful time of the year and it’s great to see all of our schools in full bloom. So, it’s going to be a great week.

Leslie Lenhart: Great. I know there’s been a lot of conversation on the news about the coronavirus, or COVID-19, and our schools and district have been doing some preparations. You want to talk a little bit about what we’re doing?

Gabriel Trujillo: Well, you know, I don’t think it’s been “some conversation,” I think it’s been all the conversation.

Leslie Lenhart: That’s true!

Gabriel Trujillo: So, a gentle correction, it’s actually all the conversation has been about COVID-19, or what’s commonly referred to as the coronavirus. Just at this time, you know, we are, as the communication indicates that we sent out from the Pima County Health Department, we are strictly adhering to recommendations from the Center for Disease Control, and our own hometown Pima County Health Department. And their recommendations are that all precautions that we normally take to eliminate, or reduce, or limit the spread of any virus, whether it’s the flu or it’s a bacterial infection, pneumonia, or bronchitis, including the potential arrival of COVID-19, the coronavirus, that we do, and that’s washing hands, and that’s using hand sanitizer, and that’s covering your mouth when you cough, that’s staying home when you’re sick.

Leslie Lenhart: Right.

Gabriel Trujillo: So right now, we are not at a DEFCON 5 situation where an outbreak is imminent.

Leslie Lenhart: Right.

Gabriel Trujillo: However, we do have to be prepared. So, what we’ve done is we formed an inter-departmental team in the district representative of every major operational area from early childhood education to transportation to food services to human resources to finance to information technology to put together a very detailed, comprehensive contingency plan should the district have to close. And I say “have to” because there are school districts and schools around the nation that are choosing to close. If Tucson Unified closes, it’s because we have been
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mandated to close by the State of Arizona’s Department for Health and Human Services or our
own Pima County Health Department. So that’s a different situation to be in.

Leslie Lenhart: Yes.

Gabriel Trujillo: That means outbreak is here and there is a public health crisis, which there
isn’t right now. But if we got to that point and Pima County said, “we need everybody closed,”
we want to be ready to do so with fidelity and with the proper preparations in place. So, that’s in
the works right now and we would give an overview of plan on March 25th. Until then, we’re
having special antibacterial kits put together for every single school.

Leslie Lenhart: Right.

Gabriel Trujillo: With a very high-powered antibacterial cleaning solution, wipes, spray bottles
for every school. We’re going to be focusing, over the next several weeks, on really frequently
cleaning what are called “touch points.” Door handles, bathroom stalls, faucets, office doorways.
Anything that is a highly trafficked touch point area that multiple people touch multiple times a
day. So, we’re going to be doing our best but I’m going to ask those listening to us, particularly
our employees and our teachers, it’s not just about the district and Operations doing its part by
delivering kits and providing the resources, so much of our ability to blunt out any potential
spread of this virus really rests on individual employee action.

Leslie Lenhart: Right.

Gabriel Trujillo: So, we can deliver the solution, we can deliver the wipes, but our fate is in the
hands of that teacher that uses the wipes and whether or not that teacher chooses to wipe down
his or her classroom multiple times a day. Or whether or not that front office employee chooses
to use the wipes to wipe down door knobs several times a day. So, it’s a combination of the
district providing the resource but ultimately, like anything else, we are relying on individual
employee action. We believe that our employees need no further motivation than to stop this
virus in its tracks should it arrive at Pima County, which we hope it doesn’t.

Leslie Lenhart: And if you’re ever looking for updates, please remember to check our social
media, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, to see the latest information from the district.

On to another subject, we had a really great win last weekend with Sabino girls basketball. You
want to talk about that?

Gabriel Trujillo: Well, I’ve got to tell you, it was a tremendous birthday present. As many in
the district know, I’m a leap year kid. I was born on February 29th, so I had the privilege and the
birthday gift of celebrating my birthday evening at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum, on the
floor, as the ladies lifted the trophy. So, I had such a wonderful time watching them. I want to
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congratulate the Sabino girls basketball team for their tremendous victory over Page. They did it under tough circumstances. Page is one of the more powerful teams in the state and they have a very loud and large traveling community. And I want to compliment senior Cameron Dotey, who very much is the unquestioned leader of the Sabino Sabercats and performed just incredibly well under pressure. It was inspiring to watch her calm under pressure, hitting all her free throws, hitting some key shots down the stretch, and making some key stops on defense, so what a way to go out for our senior super star there at Sabino. So, congratulations, again, to the Lady Sabrecats for being crowned 3A State Basketball Champions for the Arizona Interscholastic Association.

Leslie Lenhart: That’s great. So exciting and also a congratulations to the Sabino boys and the Sahuaro girls for being the semifinalists and having a great tournament, as well.

Gabriel Trujillo: Well, TUSD was rollin’ deep in the state tournament. Our Sahuaro girls, they made it to the 4A State Championship for the girls. They ran into a tremendously talented Seton Catholic team.

Leslie Lenhart: Right.

Gabriel Trujillo: That just overpowered us, but our girls, our ladies made a really, really great game. And our boys, the Sabino boys were, for the first time in almost a decade, we had the same school fielding two teams in a state championship final. So, we had the girls going for the 3A Girls Championship and then just right after them, we had our Sabino boys take the court to try to win the 3A state title for the boys. Couldn’t do it; ran into a tough American Leadership Academy School, but I want to congratulate the boys for a wonderful season, as well.

Leslie Lenhart: That’s great.

We also have an exciting announcement. One of our students at Bloom just recently was notified that he helped the school win a $5,000 grant. You want to talk about that?

Gabriel Trujillo: Yeah, I want to congratulate Mack Smith. He entered the contest to win $5,000, a ghouls and goblins grant opportunity from the Dairy Council of Arizona. What he had to do was drink a gallon of milk and then decorate it as a ghoul or a goblin. He submitted the photo of his project and he took home the $5,000 prize! So, good for Bloom Elementary School. We’re excited for him.

Leslie Lenhart: Yeah, really exciting and look forward to seeing what the school, all the things that they decided to do with that money over the next few months.

And then, we continue Love of Reading Month and National Read-In Week this week with some of our Tucson firefighters.
Gabriel Trujillo: Just want to thank the Tucson Fire Department for all of our firefighters that are taking part in the celebration of Love of Reading all throughout the month. I know that the month is winding down, or has wound down at this point, but I want to thank every firefighter that took the time out of his or her day to come into our schools and read to kids.

Leslie Lenhart: Great. Yeah, it’s been a great celebration. I know we’ve been out there and seen a number of them in, gosh, probably five, six, seven of our schools, which is really great. So, thank you.

Any last words before we wrap up this week?

Gabriel Trujillo: Have a great week, everybody.

Leslie Lenhart: And now Nicholas will take us out.

One thing I learned in school is P.E; it’s really fun. This is Nicholas Martinez, signing off.