July 9, 2020

Dear Tucson Unified School Teachers and Staff,

Without a doubt, this year has been quite the experience. In the Spring, we were thrown into a whirlwind of unpredictable changes and you all rose to the occasion when you were asked to teach in an online environment with little to no warning. Nevertheless, and as teachers inherently do, you delivered. You attended all possible professional development sessions, some of you sent me countless emails asking for more opportunities for training, and without question, you continued forging the path forward. As a community we responded to an unprecedented set of circumstances to the best of our ability and in the face of this pandemic you delivered instruction to thousands of students across this district. Many of you did this even while educating and taking care of your own children. If that is not a superhero at work, I don’t know what is. I want to personally thank you for the way you stepped up during what has been the most challenging set of circumstances we may ever be faced with.

After the school year ended, our work did not stop. We learned some valuable lessons during the first phase of this closure, have heard your feedback through the many employee forums that were facilitated throughout the month of June, and have invested a significant amount of funding to ensure our teachers and students have the devices and support necessary for success. Your patience and grace are much appreciated as we continue to develop and finalize our re-entry plans for Curriculum and Instruction. The purpose of this message is to provide you with some much needed clarity regarding key information necessary for you to begin thinking about and planning for the upcoming school year.

Please note the following:

- Teachers will start August 3rd

- School will begin for ALL students on August 10th remotely.
  - All students will begin online until our local and state health officials deem it safe to return in person. Please note that no school in Arizona is permitted to open physically prior to August 17th due to the Governor’s Executive Order.

- We will be using one online instructional model to deliver instruction to all students, whether they are learning virtually from home or have opted for on-campus traditional instruction. This means that we will utilize the online platforms to teach lessons, conduct small group instruction, to review student work, etc.

- We have made arrangements for the purchase of almost 2,000 laptops for teachers that currently do not have access to a device or for teachers that are working with outdated laptops that lack the cameras and microphones necessary to fully facilitate online learning. Our goal is to deliver this new technology to our teachers upon their return to work the week of August 3rd.

- The week of August 3-7th will be dedicated to Professional Development for all teachers.
  - Some of the topics that will be covered include the following:
- Setting up your online classroom
- Social Emotional Support for Teachers and Students
- Navigating TUSD’s online platforms: Office 365, Zoom, Clever
- Online Curriculum: Benchmark, Cengage, Waterford, Imagine Learning, Eureka Math, Apex
- Assessments: How do we do this in an online environment?
- Online grading and attendance policy

We will be bringing to the board our finalized plan for instruction on July 14. This document will be available to you shortly after. I know you will still have some questions after this, feel free to email me and we will start developing an FAQ for teachers. I appreciate your grace as we may not have all the answers right now in this ever-changing landscape.

Also, when you have the time, I highly recommend this webpage: https://resilienteducator.com/category/lifestyle/ for some suggestions and tips in the midst of COVID-19.

Thank you for your patience and Stay Healthy.

Flori Huitt
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction