

August 10, 2020

Dear Students, Families, and Friends of GUSD,

These past few weeks have certainly been most unique. Those of you who know me realize that I am not getting any younger these days! While sometimes I hate to admit it, this school-year begins my 43rd year in education. I started out as a teacher/coach, then served as a principal, and now I am entering my 27th year as a public school superintendent. I can honestly say that the challenges brought about by COVID-19 are the most daunting of any I have faced. In my time I have faced many emergencies and crisis situations, but never a prolonged pandemic like this.

As I have worked with our board of education, staff, county health department, the Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction and fellow superintendents I have attempted to keep the best interests of our customers, the kids, in mind while balancing the need for a safe return to school for both students and staff. There was controversy around the board's decision to take my recommendation to offer in-person instruction when it appeared that we would be able to do so on August 17th. Now that we are forced to remote learning for a period of time, there are still divided opinions on that decision. This is truly a time of very divergent attitudes toward many ideologies in our society, and COVID-19 has seemed to exacerbate the divergence.

As we move into another time period of remote and distance learning, I want to let you know that I am going to do everything I can to have our staff do what they do best, stay connected to your students and help them learn. This scenario is not what I had hoped for, I wanted our kids back in classrooms. As I mentioned earlier, we had planned for an August 17th return to school. The AZ Department of Health Services metrics for safely returning to school do not allow for that. I must make safety the first priority. Having said that, we will be in contact via Facebook, our website, robocalls, and other methods to try to make the beginning of school as good as possible for our students.

Please work with our staff and let us know what your needs are. We, like many other districts, have a large order of computers in process. The COVID-10 pandemic has placed a premium on personal computing devices. We will get those devices in the hands of students who need them as soon as we can. We will also alter the way we are doing remote learning. It will not be just a repeat of the closure in the spring. I encourage you to give me a call if you come across situations that are frustrating. I can't promise an immediate solution (I have come to realize that I am not in control of as much as I think sometimes!) but I can promise you I will listen and try to problem solve.

GUSD is a great place to learn for our students and to work for our staff. It is not perfect, but we have set our vision of "Capturing Hearts, Empowering Minds". This pandemic has and will really put our commitment to that vision to the test. I believe our Tiger Nation here at GUSD can meet the challenge. Thank you for being part of our schools and for supporting our efforts to serve our students!

Sincerely,

Jerry Jennex, Superintendent

Globe Unified School District #1

Learning Update – August 10, 2020

The Arizona Department of Health Services released metrics on Thursday, August 6, 2020 designed to help school districts determine whether or not schools should reopen for in-person learning. There are three health metrics that are used and Gila County was not able to meet all of the metrics. The metrics can be found at <https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-schools>. As a school, we rely on the advice of health experts in making re-opening decisions regardless of whether one believes in the validity of the metrics.

The list below includes important information for GUSD students/families:

- The Arizona Department of Health Services has determined that it is not safe for schools in Gila County to reopen for in-person learning.
- Globe Schools will begin online/distance education on August 17, 2020 for all students.
- GUSD plans to remain in online/distance learning mode for six weeks (until September 28, 2020) while using the health metrics to determine any decisions that are made. A decision about whether or not school will re-open for in-person learning on September 28 will be made during the week of September 14th.
- Our online/distance learning program is designed for our Globe students. Globe teachers and staff will keep continual communication with students and families to make sure that learning is occurring and specialized needs will be met.
- We will begin handing out computers and hotspots this week for students that have stated they have a need on our enrollment option form. We have a large order of computers and hotspots coming that will not arrive until the first week of September (our country is facing supply chain issues with all of the increased need for remote learning devices). Please only request a remote learning device if you need one so that we can provide a device to as many students as possible, based on need first.
- All online/distance learning are based off lessons designed to meet state standards and teach students from a distance. This experience will be different from the spring. Our Globe teachers have the support of an established online learning program and will receive the training necessary to help facilitate the change to online education WHILE continuing to care about and be invested in EACH of our students.
- We will contact each student family if there is a documented need for specialized learning.
- Please call the school office if you need a specialized service or on-site support services. Copper Rim – 928-402-5800; High Desert – 928-402-5900 and Globe High School – 928-402-6100.
- We care about our students and families and are saddened that we are not able to open for in-person learning at this time. Please give us the opportunity to continue to educate your student. Our program is by GLOBE teachers for GLOBE students. Go Tigers!